

TITANFALL 2 FIRST HANDS-ON IMPRESSIONS

PLAY



250
PS4 & VITA
GAMES RATED

PLAYTEST
HORIZON
ZERO
DAWN

KRATOS IS BACK!
GOD OF WAR

PS4 PS3 Vita PSN WelcomePLAY

The mag with the strongest beard game in the business



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Kratos sets his sights on Norse mythology

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OUT WITH THE OLD



NOSTALGIA CAN BE rather a weird thing. I work pretty closely with the team on Retro Gamer magazine these days and while I absolutely love going back the games I grew

up with, there aren't actually all that many from my early years of playing that honestly still hold up. Consoles and computers, being technology and all, evolve at a crazy rate and most things that used to be state-of-the-art end up showing their age pretty badly a few years later. While this is naturally most evident in much older stuff (I tried to play the Spectrum version of *Final Fight* recently and it made my brain seep out of my ears), it's even apparent in much more recent things. Going back to the PS3 and 360, consoles I used almost daily for the best part of a decade, made me realise just how good we have it today. They're slow and cumbersome to navigate, lacking in loads of basic features we now take for granted and just generally way worse in terms of ease of use than the likes of the PS4 – how I ever lived without the ability to suspend and resume games or control Spotify through my iPad while playing, I'll never know.

And the Progress Train continues to barrel on, with some of the games we saw unveiled and revisited at E3 looking to be yet another generational leap in terms of fidelity and depth. *Horizon* is my jam, *Detroit* is looking incredible, *Insomniac* doing Spidey is a perfect fit but above all else, it was *God Of War* that stole the show for me. It would have been all too easy for the team to fall back on that wonderful thing called nostalgia and just had Kratos murder millions of things at once just like before, but the team has instead chosen to take a far more interesting approach with the new game. Change can be a good thing, as you're likely to discover in the pages that follow.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

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CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guilty Gear Xrd -Revelator-

PLAY+ Contents

Don't get mad... get even more excited for all this cool stuff!

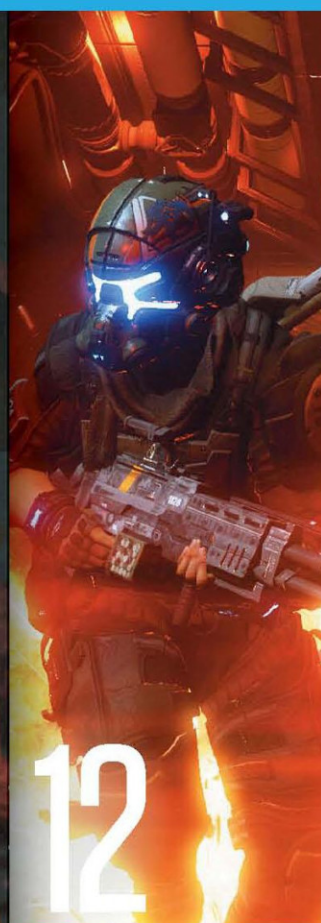
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THE EPIC RETURN OF GOD OF WAR

Kratos heads Norse as the exclusive blockbuster franchise comes of age



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DESPITE KRATOS
DEVELOPING A CASE
OF THE FEELS, THIS
NORDIC BLOODBATH
IS AS GRIM AS EVER

GOD OF



WAR



IT'S INCREDIBLY RARE to see a popular series make a sudden change of direction. Fans know what they like, developers know what they're good at, suits know what sells... there's just little reason to switch to a brand new template when everything is already working as intended. *Resident Evil VII's* surprising shift to first-person horror screams in the face of this suggestion, but there was little left for Capcom to do but to hit the reset button – carried away in the wake of the success and popularity of *Resident Evil 4's* reinvention as an action game more than a horror one, sequels just ended up getting more and more ridiculous until the scariest thing about the series was the idea of trying to make any sense of its needlessly convoluted overarching narrative, in which the original game's pair of heroes had become a steroid-flavoured, boulder-punching, machine gun-toting beefcake and a mind-controlled assassin cosplaying as Nina Williams while its pantomime villain had died repeatedly and come back with more superpowers every time.

While not perhaps quite so brazenly stupid (and with something of a pass initially, due to its mythical nature), *God Of War* too found itself painted into a corner. Escalation of spectacle meant that Kratos' feats just kept getting more exceptional and his methods increasingly brutal, until all that was left was a walking war cry ripping the limbs off whatever bit-part players from Greek mythology he might have overlooked during his seven-game campaign of fury against Zeus and his mates. Most recently, *Ascension* ticked all the right boxes – it looked incredible, played great and had some killer setpieces – but desensitised as we all are to Kratos' murderous antics, it simply lacked impact. Which, for a game about doing battle with mythical beasts and deities, is probably one of the worst things you could say about it. Kratos, having started life as the victim, had been reduced to an antihero out for perpetual vengeance whose one last dimension (that of pure anger) had begun to wear thin.

We have to admit to being taken by surprise slightly when a thick-bearded Kratos stepped out of the shadows at the beginning of the first gameplay demo of this completely new direction for *God Of War*. The most obvious solution to the team's predicament would have been to leave him behind and start a brand new saga – a fresh face for a fresh start. Comments »

“LOOK CLOSELY AT THE KID’S FACE AND YOU CAN SEE SCARRING AROUND HIS LEFT EYE THAT CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE FAMILIAR RED PATTERN ON HIS FATHER’S FACE”

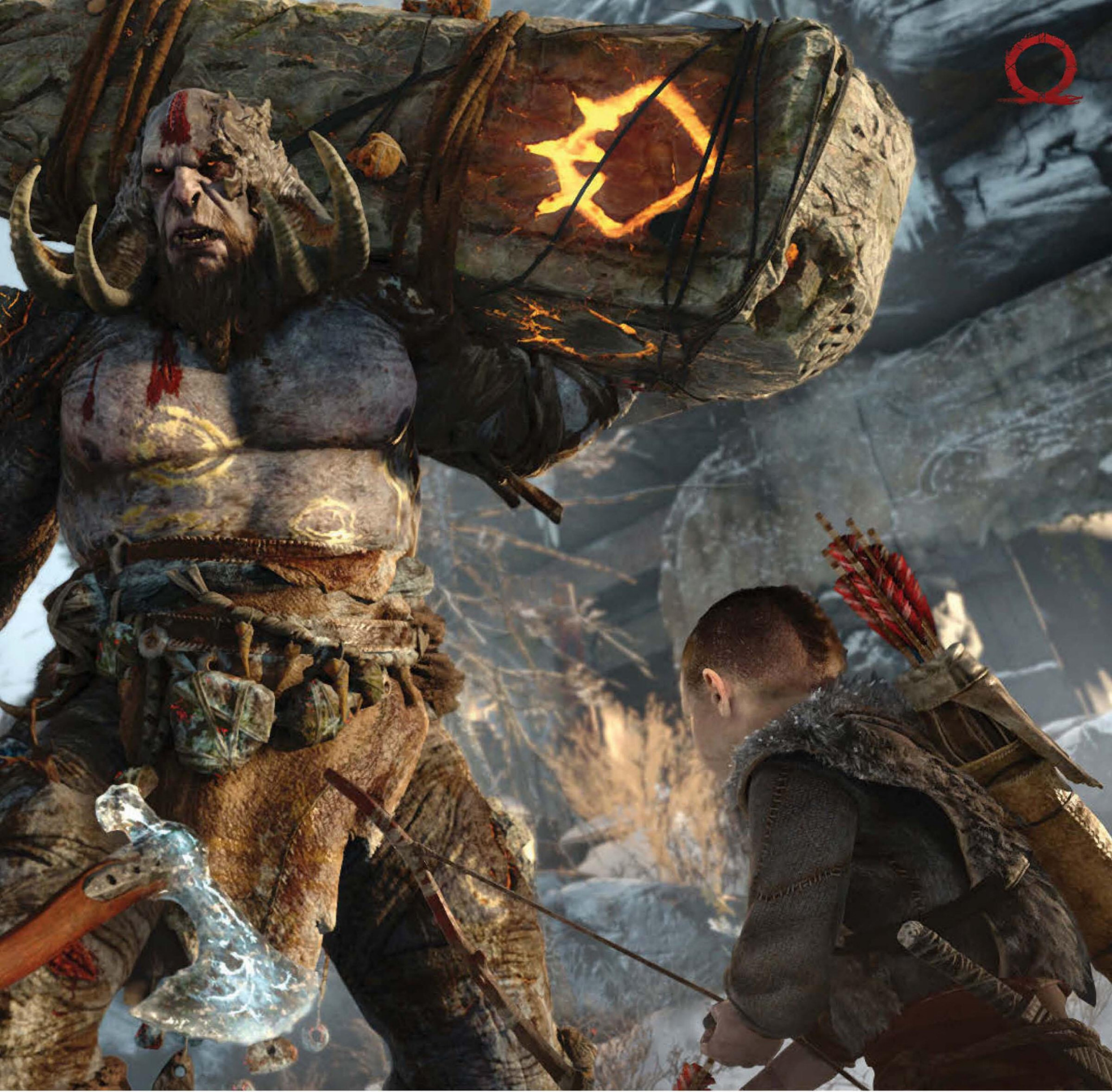
» from director Cory Barlog suggest this might still be the case, just not immediately. Kratos’ son, while seemingly not directly playable in this first chapter, is clearly being set up to succeed his old man, the entirety of the game looking to be a father-and-son adventure that introduces us to not only the new potential star of the show but also to a character we’ve never really met before – Kratos himself. No longer blinded by a lust for bloody vengeance having devoured the entire Greek mythology platter, this new framework shows us a whole new side of the Sony icon. Outside of his tragic origin story, we’ve only really been privy to his godly antics but as a demi-god, that’s literally only half of who he is. Finally getting to see more of the human side of Kratos is refreshing, unexpected and, in truth, exactly what the franchise needed.

It’s a more personal tale, then, and that calls for a more personal approach. Gone is the fixed camera in favour of an over-the-shoulder affair that brings us in closer to the action. Instead of a cheap-seats view of a guy flinging chains at hordes of monsters, we’re treated to more intimate encounters with just a few enemies, but where every last detail shines through. Kratos’ new axe hacks out chunks of flesh with each weighty, purposeful blow, severing body parts and leaving lasting gaping wounds that weep and spurt as fights draw on. Those that claim that the spectacle is lost are missing the point – it’s just a different kind of spectacle now, one of minutia rather than grandiosity, although Barlog has addressed concerns by stating that the camera can still pull back should the hordes of old return at any point. Just as with stablemate *Uncharted 4*, the attention to detail is simply staggering and pulling in closer really lets us get a great feel for the new setting, in which the Norse pantheon replaces the now-extinct Greek one. The closer perspective also echoes the narrative to a degree, highlighting subtleties in the interactions between father and son that would have been impossible to make out before. There’s a beautiful shot at the end of the demo where, after guiding his son through his first hunt and kill, Kratos extend his arm to comfort the shaken child, pauses, then retracts it. Indecision and (attempted) tenderness are not things we’ve seen from the yelling dervish of blades previously, and it’s oddly affecting.

So what do we know about the kid? Very little at this point, truth be told. His identity, as well as that of his mother, looks to be an integral part of the narrative. The fact that neither has even been named yet suggests that they’ll both be revealed as existing persons from this »

■ As Kratos hacks at the troll’s shins, every blow leaves accurate wounds and when he hits boiling point, that familiar rage is unleashed as horns and teeth shatter, bones are broken and the final blow is dealt without a giant floating button prompt. Nice.





READING THE RUNES

WE ATTEMPT TO DECIPHER THE GAME'S LOGO

NAUTHIZ(?)

The only character of the eight not to directly resemble an Elder Futhark rune, although it's closest to Nauthiz. Its literal meaning of 'need' could relate to Kratos' son or, to take a more abstract interpretation, it could be a reference to the Norns – Norse mythology's equivalent of the Fates Kratos previously encountered.

GEBO

While seemingly upbeat with its translation of 'gift', it can have slightly darker connotations – 'gift' could in fact be referring to a gift to the gods rather than from them, a sacrifice to be made. It's pretty clear from the tone of the game so far that Kratos will likely have to make a few of those...

TIWAZ

This one seems to be a bastardisation of the rune of Tyr, Ares' counterpart on the Norse pantheon and the god of war. The rune appears to be split and partly reversed, possibly suggesting that this mythology's god of war could be replaced or have a counterpart: Kratos, his son, or someone else?

HAGALAZ

'Hail' is the literal meaning, referring to either the natural occurrence or a projectile barrage, both suggesting a force of destruction. Some have suggested this could instead be a reference to Hel, ruler of the realm of the dead and a figure not unlike Hades from Kratos' previous rampage.

SOWULO

Representative of the sun, although the rune can also be linked with Baldur, a prominent god of light and purity whose death would be the first event in a chain of many that would lead to the collapse of the Norse gods at Ragnarok.

EIHWAZ

This is a tricky one, and could have something of a double meaning here. Its meaning is 'yew', used in bow-making (we've already seen Kratos teaching his boy archery) and tied to hunting god Ull. It can also, however, be seen as a reference to Yggdrasil, the world tree.

INGUZ

Prominent Norse god Freyr is most likely the reference here – 'freyr' itself simply means 'lord', though the rune takes his actual name, which is often truncated to simply Ing. With a boar steed and a magic sword that can fight on its own, this guy was seemingly always destined for videogame greatness.

JÖRMUNGAND

■ That's no ordinary border into which the runes are scrawled – that's a depiction of the World Serpent that coiled all the way around Midgard in legends. Look closely in the demo footage and there are several moments when you see what appears to be a giant scaly body moving in the background. It's probably this guy.

MANNAZ

Close to modern English, this simply means 'man', whether referring to humankind in general or a single individual. Some sources also tie it to Odin – a shoo-in for the game as effectively Zeus' opposite number.



■ With the game apparently playing out as one long continuous sequence, expect to see quite the bond develop between father and son.

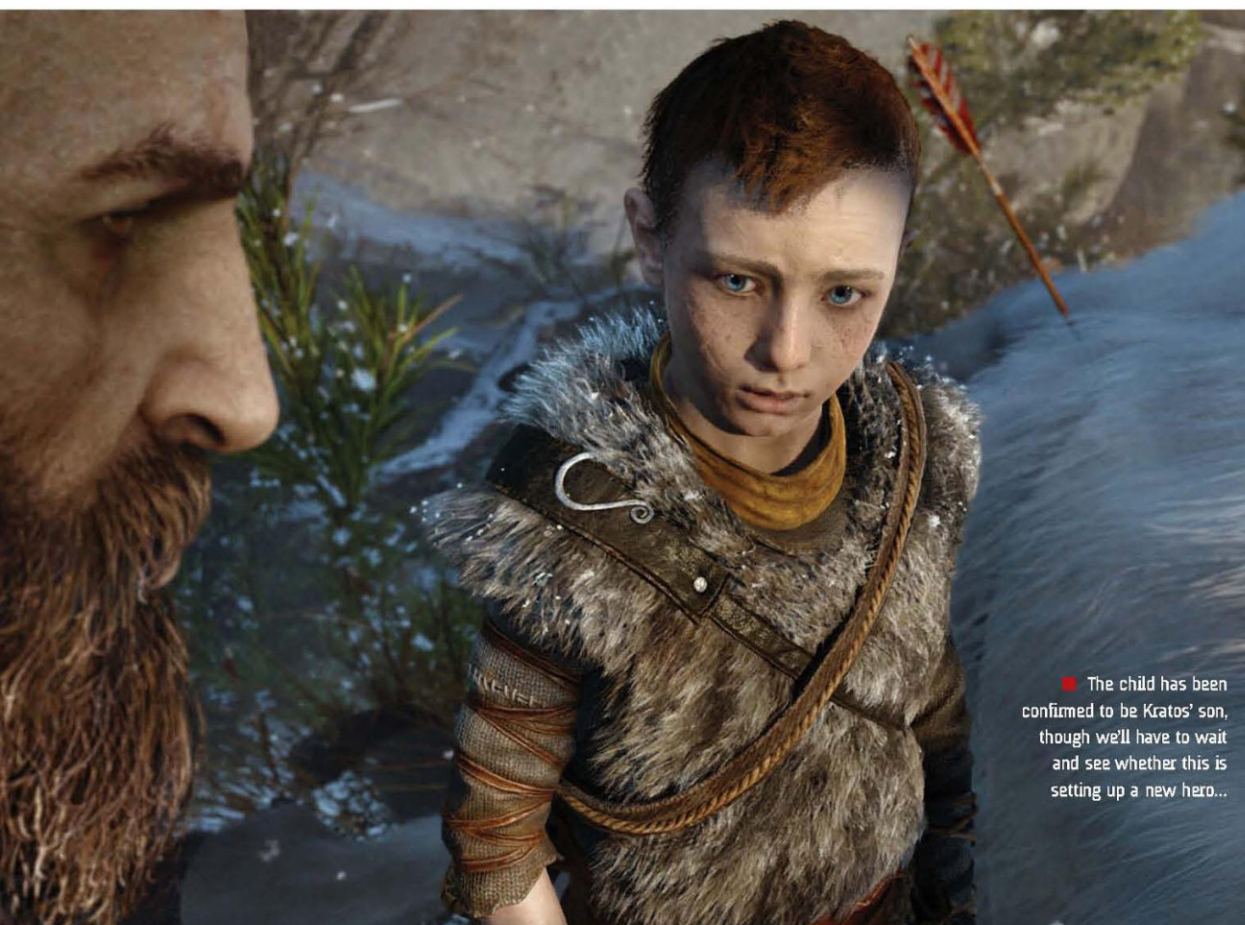


■ *GOW III* showed off a Kratos character model years ahead of anything else on the PS3 and – in joint first place with polar opposite good ol' Nathan Drake – Santa Monica Studio has now set a new graphical benchmark for character realisation.

» new lore, or will go on to replace such characters, as Kratos did Ares in his own debut. Look closely at the kid's face and you can see scarring around his left eye that closely resembles the familiar red pattern on his father's face, leading to rampant speculation in search of a deeper meaning. The idea that Kratos could be training up this era's younger version of himself seems a little far-fetched, especially since we know the older Kratos is the real deal – his arms still bear the scars left by the Blades Of Chaos (albeit hidden under thick gloves and binding much of the time), plus various other aspects of his new design and indeed trinkets spotted in his home when the demo begins leave little room for doubt. It could simply be a symbolic thing, whether to represent the child's destiny as Kratos' replacement or even as a 'sins of the father' deal. His old man does have a fair bit of divine blood on his hands, after all.

While we mentioned earlier that the boy won't be playable, that's perhaps not entirely accurate. You see, Santa Monica Studio has placed such importance on the kid that he's been given his very own button on the DualShock 4. Usage will be context-sensitive, meaning you could call for a bow assist during combat, shout out to him when he wanders too far away or point out small details to him to help in his education, all without the need for an on-screen button prompt. UI in general has been massively cleaned up to let the incredible visuals do all the talking, actually – the near-pointless combo counter of older games is gone, health gauge and gear icons are shrunk and simplified, and finisher prompts are subtle rather than the giant flashing on-screen button symbols of old. Just as losing huge mana gauges and flashing magic icons in favour of a simpler solution helps strengthen the idea of a humanised Kratos, so too does the lack of general 'videogame' clutter – much of it a hangover from the time of the series' inception over a decade ago – serve to reinforce the positive shift towards mature interactive fiction.

It's a bold step for one of Sony's strongest franchises, but one we can only commend. Watching Kratos lead his son through the forest, there are moments that evoke elements of *The Last Of Us* and *Uncharted*, dynamic and interesting relationships and environmental storytelling finding a new home in a series which, historically, has never needed such devices to help explain its simple 'Angry man kills big things because revenge' story. While earlier *God Of War* titles did justice to their subject matter through design and tone, this reboot looks instead to respect and live among the mythology that inspires it, using it as an entire world for father and son to explore together rather than a checklist of important people to rip apart. That's not to say there won't still be plenty of that, of course; the hulking great troll in the demo gets quite the introduction to Kratos' new combat abilities and teases of giants (as seen strung up in the bandit camp), dragons and even what appears to be a glimpse of Jörmungandr (literally "great beast": the World Serpent that encircles the entire mortal realm in Norse mythology) all suggest even bigger fights are to come. It's just nice to know that for once, there'll be a little more intrigue when meeting new characters than simply trying to work out what grisly fate lies in store for them.



■ The child has been confirmed to be Kratos' son, though we'll have to wait and see whether this is setting up a new hero...

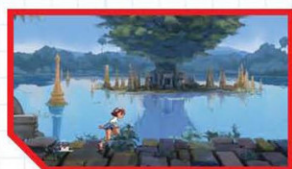
INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie experts delve into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation



WE'VE GOT LOADS of time for *Skullgirls* developer Lab Zero, so we were always going to throw money at whatever the team's next project was going to be. Luckily, the IndieGoGo crowd-funding campaign for **INDIVISIBLE** allowed us to do just that and based on the playable demo version of the game (it's on the PlayStation Store, if you fancy giving it a bash for yourself), it's coming together really well. Platforming is handled well and has a neat flow to it, especially once you grab the axe – more than just a melee weapon, this allows obstacles to be cleared and walls to be clung to in order to help reach new areas. Touch an enemy in the platforming sections and it's battle time, with combat playing out in real time but based on a similar set of gauges to *Final Fantasy's* ATB system. All four characters charge their attacks at once, with regular attacks consuming one stock – you can either unleash attacks one at a time, or string together complex combos that get the whole party involved. It's a cool system and we can't wait to see more of it.

AOXO *Indivisible* uses a similar art style to *Skullgirls*, hardly surprising considering it's by the same team.



If the colourful tone and cartoon style of *Indivisible* don't do it for you, perhaps the neon glow and cyberpunk pixel art beauty of **THE LAST NIGHT** will prove to be more up your street. Taking inspiration from classics like *Flashback* and *Another World*, the team is calling the game a 'cinematic platformer,' a style of game it rightly points out has been missing from the gaming landscape for quite some time. There are hints of *Blade Runner* in the game's style, as well as it ticking a lot of the same boxes that *Fear Effect* did back in the day, if purely in terms of style. Given that it's being

created by a team of just two brothers, we wouldn't expect to see *The Last Night* for a little while yet. If the wait proves too hard, there's a playable prototype online.



DEV DIARY Don't panic – *No Man's Sky* has finally gone gold!

At the time of writing, *No Man's Sky* developer Hello Games just took to Twitter to show off a picture of the team celebrating as a wonderfully-bearded Sean Murray held aloft a newly-burned DVD. What was on it? Why, the complete final build of its ambitious space exploration game – it's finally finished and off to be manufactured ahead of its August release date. It's a huge load off for the team – who had been receiving death threats following the announcement of the game's delay – and we wish them all success with the game. We sure as hell can't wait to play it!



Some people simply don't have any love for games that employ pixel art (for some weird reason – *The Last Night* is freaking beautiful) but it's used by so many indie games and teams that PREY FOR THE GODS really stands out with its rich 3D visuals and stellar production values. The list of influences contains some obvious ones (*Shadow Of The Colossus* being chief among them) as well as some more surprising ones such as *FTL* and *DayZ*. A survival game where your only hope to stay alive is to kill the very gods you believe created you and your world, which will be no small task. In true time-honoured survival game fashion, you'll start out with nothing and need to find and craft the tools that will let you scale and bring down the towering 'bosses' (to bring this fantastic premise hurtling back into videogame territory) and considering the team consists of only three people, *Prey For The Gods* is an incredible technical achievement already. As we write this, the game's Kickstarter is on track to meet its target, although it'll need to double it in order for the PS4 version to be made. Get involved!



AOX There's more than a whiff of *Shadow Of The Colossus* about this impressive indie effort...



"YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE TO GYRATE LIKE A LUNATIC WHILE BLIND TO REAL WORLD HAZARDS"



Time for another look at what's in the indie pipeline as far as VR is concerned, with confirmation that **HARMONIX MUSIC VR** will be available alongside the headset in October. Unlike the team's superb *Rock Band* games, this doesn't appear to be your typical rhythm-action game. It's a selection of different modes, the latest of which to be revealed is Dance. Don't worry – you're not going to have to gyrate like a lunatic while blind to real world obstacles thanks to the headset. Instead, you'll simply be able to choreograph and edit dance routines for a host of quirky in-game characters before watching your custom show as if you were really there. As with the other modes – a set of landscapes that act as a visualiser for music and a 3D painting tool that lets you create musically-infused art – the best part here is that you'll be able to use your own music across most (if not all) activities. Load your own tunes onto a USB stick and you'll be good to go, whether you choose to explore your musical choices, get creative around them or simply force little dudes to dance to them. As something completely different to PSVR's other launch titles, we'll be picking this up.

AOX While more experience than game, *Music VR* is looking awesome.



FUNDED SYSTEM SHOCK

PLATFORMS: PC, XBOX ONE
ETA: TBC



We wouldn't have had the excellent *BioShock* games if it wasn't for the equally great *System Shock* games before them, so it delights us to see a team of veteran coders hit its funding target so quickly. There's no confirmation of a PS4 version yet but given how well *BioShock* did on PS3, it seems daft to miss out on such a huge install base. The original games have aged pretty badly, so a remake makes perfect sense at this point.

WISHLIST SHOWER WITH YOUR DAD SIMULATOR 2015



This PC oddity is every bit as strange as it sounds... and then some! While it starts out as a weird score attack game, it isn't long before it begins throwing out surprises and moving the goalposts entirely – it's hard to say much more than that without spoiling things but let's just say things are very much not as they first appear. We've been messing around with the Steam version since last year, so we'd love to see it on console.

IF YOU LOVE... MANAGEMENT GAMES



The excellent *Prison Architect* just arrived on PS4, for those of you who reckon you could create the perfect penitentiary.

ETA 28 OCTOBER

PUB EA

DEV RESPAWN

Titanfall 2

Hands-on with one of 2016's most promising shooters



Titanfall 2 makes a strong first impression. If ever there was a concern that developer Respawn Entertainment would be forced to dilute the core competitive experience as it

shifted towards a multiplatform release, it has been completely obliterated following some hands-on time with the upcoming shooter. There's an instant thrill to be found being a part of this universe, nimbly darting between walls and rooftops as a Pilot; strapping yourself back into an all-powerful personalised Titan and unleashing hell on all manner of unsuspecting enemy and AI players. This is the same *Titanfall* that Xbox and PC players fell in love with back in 2014, only its content and action have been greatly expanded in scope and appeal.

Respawn has tapped into something special with *Titanfall 2*, doing just enough to keep the game feeling unique – even as *Call Of Duty* does its best to bolt environmental traversal onto its aching template to compete. Much like its predecessor, *Titanfall 2* still rewards those with a mastery of vertical space. Pilots with strong spatial awareness will still easily topple even the biggest of foes and outrun the most trigger happy of enemies, though Respawn is introducing new tools to cut back the learning curve and, ultimately, refine its hyperactive arena play even further.

The Front Rifleman is the standout addition, a class offering a grappling hook as a tool that attaches to essentially any surface in the environment. Any fear that this would simplify traversal are immediately quelled when combined with the shooter's trademark wall-running and jet-pack-assisted movement. For the newbie, it is designed to get players around the basic idea and importance of movement. Skilled Pilots, on the other hand, will be able to move with deft precision; bounding across the rooftops overlooking the chaos at street level, pulling themselves between ledges and surfaces with speed, darting between enemy Titans and

even yanking enemies towards them from adjacent buildings for the ultimate glory kills. It's a simple but stunning addition to the game. The grappling hook rewards smart, inventive play and, perhaps most integrally, gives *Titanfall* a newfound sense of momentum that is quite simply peerless in the shooter space.

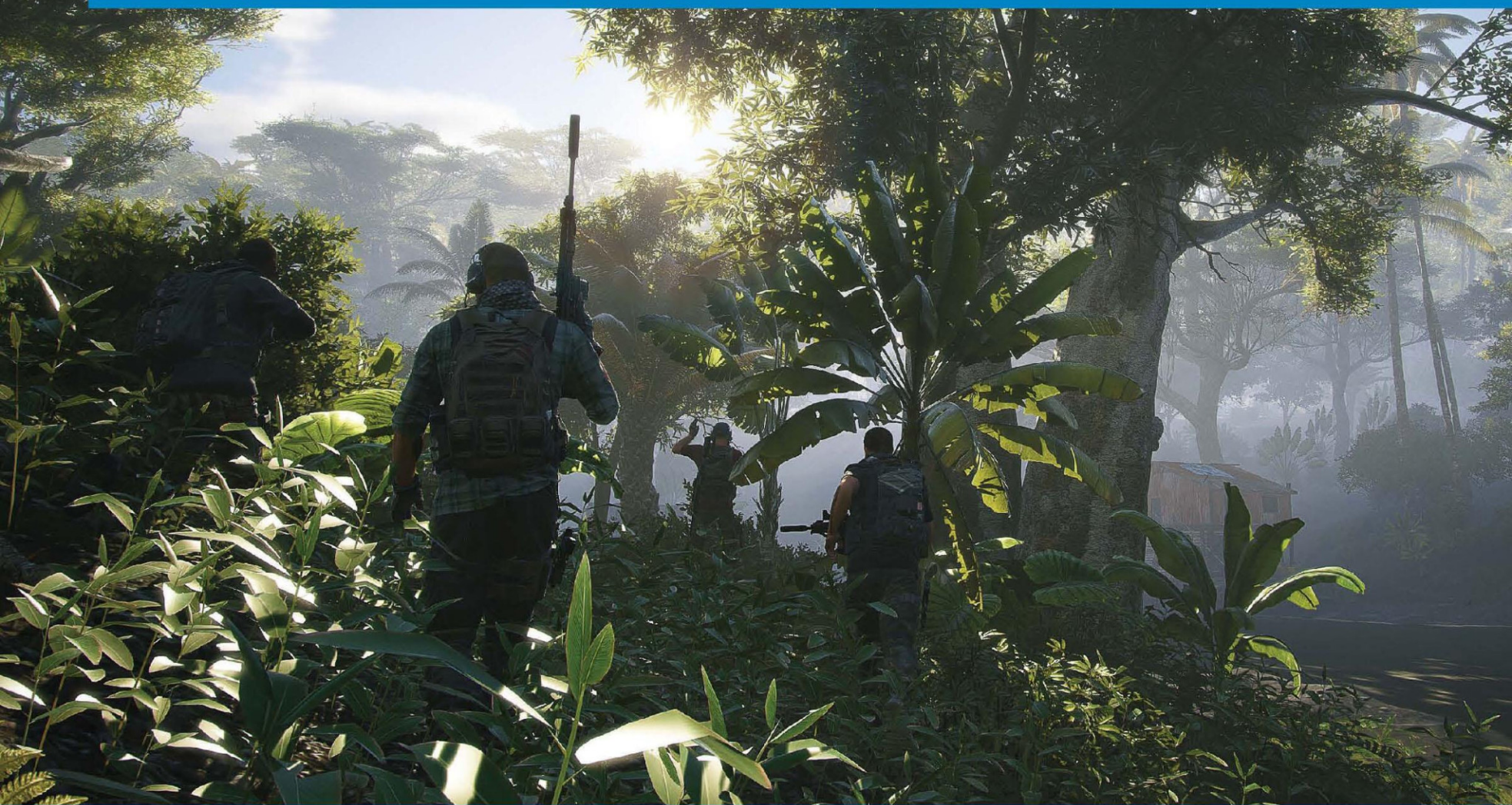
A grappling hook isn't all that Respawn is bringing to this sequel, of course, and each new Pilot and Titan class feels just as clearly defined. The Counter Sniper class comes equipped with a wicked S2 Double Take long-range rifle and Gravity Stars that fiercely shift the gravity around unsuspecting players to great affect. The Scorch Titan class offers up a brutal AOE Flame Core attack that turns the ground around you into a blazing inferno, whereas Ion can utilise a punishing focused laser attack to take down Pilots with pinpoint precision. Whenever a player changes Pilot or Titan class, the effect it has on the pace of firefights and tactics in play shifts dramatically – *Titanfall 2* is making a great effort to keep play as varied as possible, whilst still keeping its core design pillars intact.

Respawn is tackling the criticism levied at its debut game with a lot of heart and expertise. Concerns over content are being addressed with a commitment to delivering free DLC maps. Progression is being enhanced by greatly expanding the variety of weapons and equipment available. Those who didn't like the AI-controlled grunts of the original – whose inclusion felt forced, an attempt to make maps built big enough for Titans appear busy – will be happy to hear certain multiplayer modes will be playable without them, and the addition of a single-player campaign should sort out that vocal minority who would rather listen to exposition alone than grapple other players out of the sky while ejecting out of an exploding Titan. Each to their own, we guess...

TITANFALL 2 is being prepared for deployment by Respawn Entertainment. Find out more at titanfall.com







ETA 7 MARCH 2017 | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT PARIS

Ghost Recon: Wildlands

Does Ubisoft's latest have the gameplay to match its scale?



There's little argument to be made against *Ghost Recon: Wildlands*' credentials. It's without question one of the most visually arresting videogames shown off this year, with

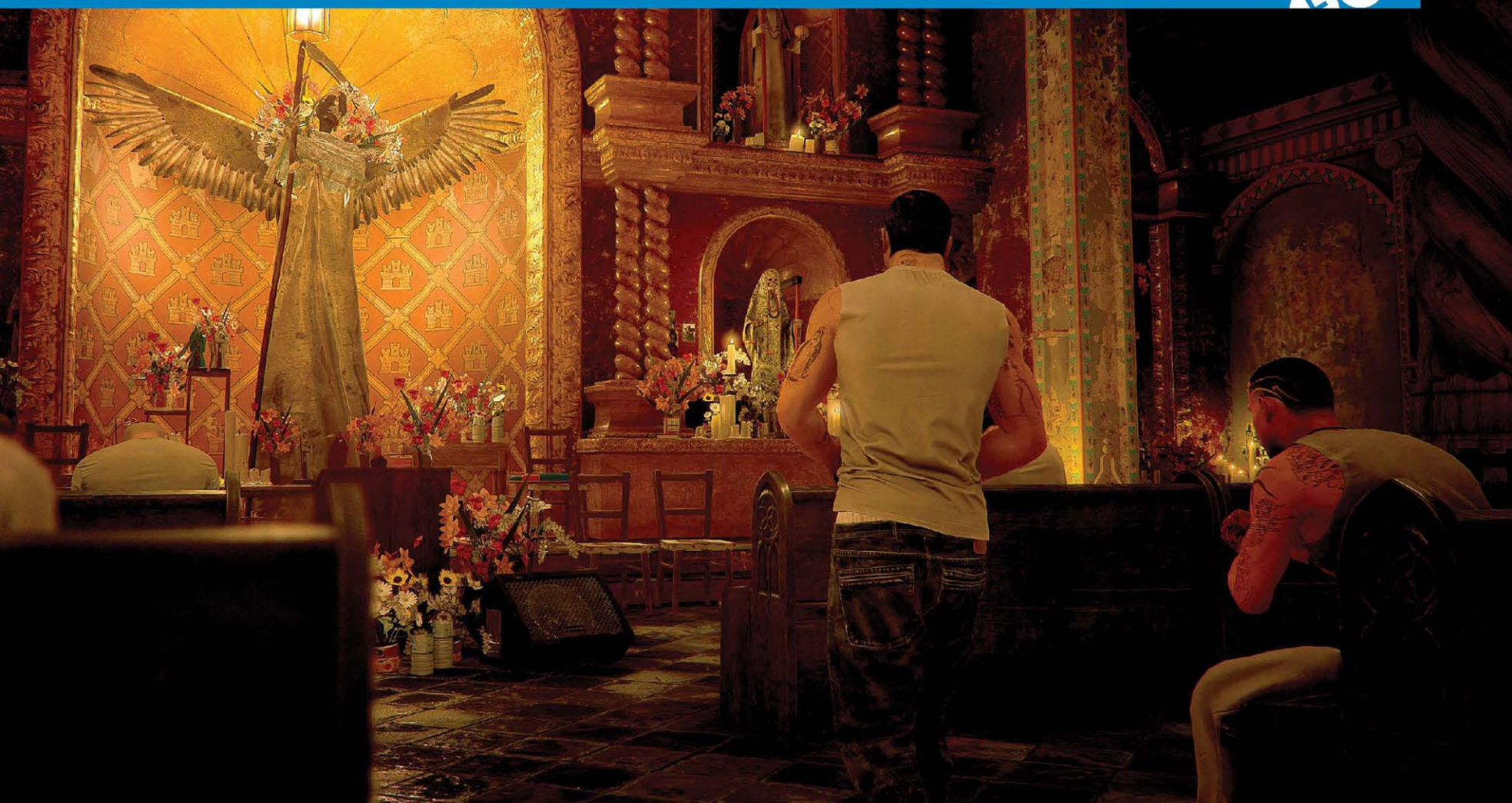
Ubisoft's open-world interpretation of a drug-ravaged Bolivia immediately impressing all that see it. It's the largest space the publisher has ever commissioned, a sprawling web of tall mountains, dense jungles, and harsh stretches of desert that combine to create ten distinct regions; the scale and spectacle of it all is, well, spectacular – a grounded, modern environment that immediately indicates a change in style, weaponry and pace to *Wildlands* when compared to its most recent (more futuristic) predecessors.

Ubisoft Paris is doubling down on the publisher's commitment to fostering friendships on the battlefield, with *Wildlands* featuring drop-in/drop-out co-op for up to four players, a huge variety of land, air and sea vehicles to take command of across the world and a design that's open enough to let you tackle missions however you see fit. With ten cartel lieutenants – not to mention Bolivia's own king of crime, El Sueño – all begging for execution, such freedom isn't just welcome, it's absolutely necessary.

As you've no doubt noticed in the past, Ubisoft has a habit of reusing and re-purposing many mechanics, systems and design elements across games under its umbrella. So you may be wondering whether *Wildlands* would be little more than *The Division*'s co-op and cover-based shooting mechanics jumbled together with *Far Cry*'s beautiful systemic open world design, right? *Wildlands* isn't this; in fact, it isn't much of anything right now. *Wildlands* doesn't have the core gameplay loop or mechanics to match its ambitious open world. Combat isn't nearly as satisfying as the lengthy gameplay videos released so far would seem to suggest, with weightless weapons and poor audiovisual feedback leaving *Wildlands* feeling a little hollow in its current state.

Classically, the gameplay of the *Ghost Recon* series is synonymous with tactics and realism. Both – at least in this alpha build – seem to have been abandoned. *Wildlands* is all sizzle and no steak, appearing to be closer to a third-person *Far Cry* than a game befitting the Tom Clancy branding. There's no cover system in place, pushing for gameplay around a run-and-gun playstyle – the most tactical manoeuvre the highly trained Ghost Recon operative can harness is the ability to drop into a prone position. With the game positioned for release in March, we have little doubt that tightening up the shooting mechanics and gameplay loop will be a top priority for Ubisoft Paris. But right now, *Wildlands*' gameplay doesn't support the ambitious open design.

“WITH TEN CARTEL LIEUTENANTS ALL BEGGING FOR EXECUTION, THE DEGREE OF FREEDOM ON OFFER HERE ISN'T JUST WELCOME – IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY”



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ A huge play area and the ability to tackle targets however you see fit.
- ◻ Drop-in/drop-out co-op is pretty much a welcome addition to any game.
- ✕ The franchise has a history of offering great experiences.
- There's plenty of time for the alpha build we saw to be tightened up.



ETA OCTOBER | PUB SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT | DEV GUERRILLA CAMBRIDGE

Rigs: Mechanized Combat League

The future of sports games starts here



What will sports be like in the near-future? Well, if it doesn't turn out to be rocket cars punting oversized footballs about (which

seems unlikely), it could quite easily be mechs replacing humans in a number of arenas.

Rigs: Mechanized Combat League will offer handful of different future sports to take part in, but what we got some hands-on time with on this occasion was its take on basketball. Strapping on our PSVR headset and entering the garage of our sports team, we selected our preferred mech type. They differ in their speed, on-board weapons and their general movement capabilities, so picking the right mech could prove important.

Each mech has two large weapons strapped to it. You aim with your head and shoot accordingly, using the left analogue stick to move around and making use of a dash button for a burst of speed when you need it. Weapon loadouts are dependent on what mech you've chosen, so balancing your team and playing to your strengths are important.

In the mode we played, killing opponents would have them drop energy orbs. Get enough orbs and your Rig will 'overload'. Once overloaded, you essentially become the ball that needs to get dunked through an overtly large basket. If you manage to self-dunk yourself, your team will gain a point.

Of course, it isn't going to be that easy. Once you've become overloaded, sirens and all sorts start going off. Everyone is going to know you're as hot as a pistol.

The combat feels really satisfying, especially as you look and see your lasers lock onto your opponent. You could decide to play the role as your team's hitman, going entirely on the offensive and just making mincemeat of your increasingly frustrated opponents.

If you fall victim to an enemy, you will be redeployed onto the battlefield from above. You will hover above the field and look out for possible drop points to become available. Once they are active, you select them and freefall down – smashing into the ground with debris surrounding you.

It took a little getting used to, but this tends to be the case with most VR experiences. We

△××△ Rig designs showcase plenty of variety, ranging from strong armoured sluggish types to light resourceful variants.



had little trouble with the combat, but issues with gauging speeds and distances while travelling did crop up. Numerous times, it felt like we were coming up short while trying to make that key jump or gain enough speed to jump across a ramp to score a vital point.

It is also easy to get distracted by the great scale of the arenas. The cinematic entrance of you coming down a lift to the sound of crowd noise and stadium announcements is pretty impressive, for instance.

Ultimately, it will be interesting to see how much replayability *Rigs* will offer. Even though we saw plenty of mechs to choose from and have been promised numerous sports to take part in, there's still some concern this could end up as a casual tech-demo. Then again, *Rocket League* seemed to do alright for itself...

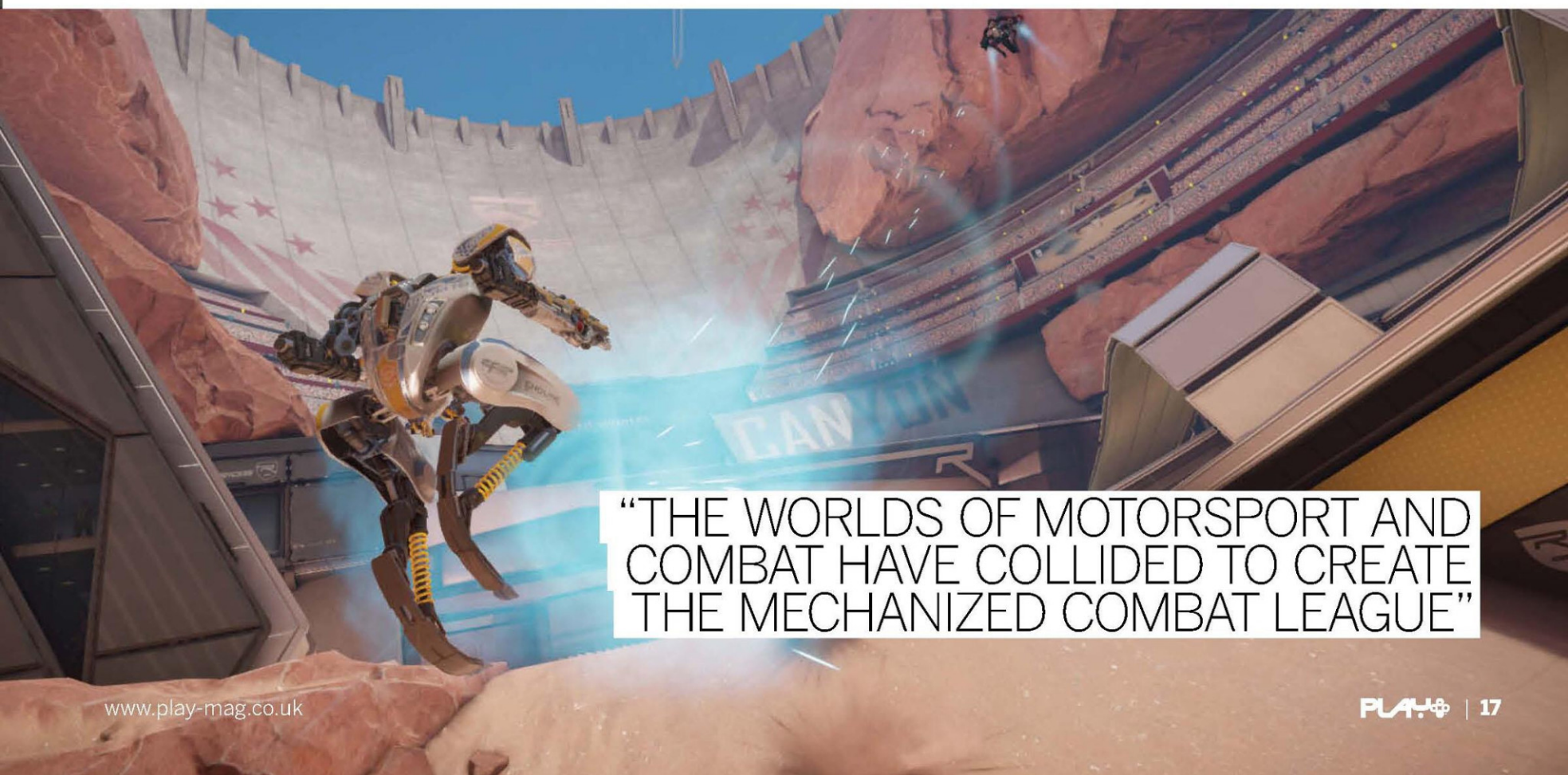
RIGS is in the last few months of its training over at Guerrilla Cambridge. Get ready for the inevitable montage here: playstation.com



△×△ These grand arenas are full of colour, with some great team decals and insignia printed across the map, along with their futuristic structural design. Crowds cheer and roar as each team scores and kills their way to victory.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ It's pretty much the flagship game for PlayStation VR – expect a big push.
- *Rocket League* showed us just how much fun fictional sports on PS4 can be.
- × It's proof that PSVR games don't need to cut corners and will still be visually impressive.
- It's one of the few 'actual' games for PSVR, rather than experiences or demos.



“THE WORLDS OF MOTORSPORT AND COMBAT HAVE COLLIDED TO CREATE THE MECHANIZED COMBAT LEAGUE”





ETA 1 MARCH 2017

DEV GUERRILLA GAMES

PUB SONY

Horizon Zero Dawn

Guerrilla's robot monster has a soul after all



The more we see of this world, with its mighty robo-inhabitants, the more excited we get. Guerrilla has just gone to town with creativity here,

creating a glorious open world with a stunning colour palette and a bunch of neat ideas.

Within camp, you're going to be trading and selling goods, no surprises there. But how do you buy and sell with no formal currency? Well, you'll be collecting shards, bits and pieces from the husks of your victims. Although, you might start to find that you don't hugely get on with too many people; the post-apocalyptic world is "corrupted", and your tribe's decision is pretty much to ignore it. Aloy, however, the archer protagonist, wants to go and investigate the mythical gods, whom the tribe believe can solve all their problems.

Of course, you might want to actually listen to them; it's a terrifying world out there. Have you seen how huge the creatures are? We promise you they're even more intimidating up close and personal. That said, what kind of wild adventurer would you be if you just stayed at home? An adventure it is, then. The first step is strength: to increase your power, you'll have to

hunt your enemies for those valuable shards and materials, which is no mean feat.

Luckily, Aloy can scan the environment and work out the paths of some of the machine lifeforms. You can even "convince" some of the wildlife into being a mount for you. Slower creatures march around in small groups and carry valuables onboard their armour. If you can manage to lure one away from the pack, then they can be very useful, dropping hot loot and even information of the whereabouts of possible "corruption".

Assaulted by a miffed, scorpion-like goliath, there's no chance we were going to take this thing down with just a bow and a knife. At this stage, we're not strong enough to rip it limb from limb, but we can pin each individual appendage to the ground with a phenomenally useful grappling hook. Each pin slowly crippling it, we then saw it wincing with pain, and that's when we realised that *Horizon Zero Dawn* might be our new favourite game.

HORIZON ZERO DAWN is Guerrilla Games' latest cybernetic nightmare creature. Find out more at guerrilla-games.com

HEAVY RAIN Quantic Dream's first PS3 game was stronger overall than follow-up *Beyond*, so get your Jason on in preparation.

NOT CHRIS' BLOOD

Implant in the head not obvious enough? The fact that he's leaving blue bloodstains on his hostage is a dead giveaway this guy isn't human. Doesn't mean he won't listen to reason, though.

KEEP THE PEACE

Moments of tension are likely to be common, though smart investigation and persuasion can usually help reach non-violent solutions to situations that arise.



HAIR-RAISING

Remember how nobody could do hair at the start of the generation and everybody had to wear hats, helmets or hoods? Yeah, devs seem to have figured it out now...

ETA 2017 | DEV QUANTIC DREAM | PUB SONY

Detroit

Become human



There are very few more divisive things in the triple-A gaming space than the collected works of David Cage. For every

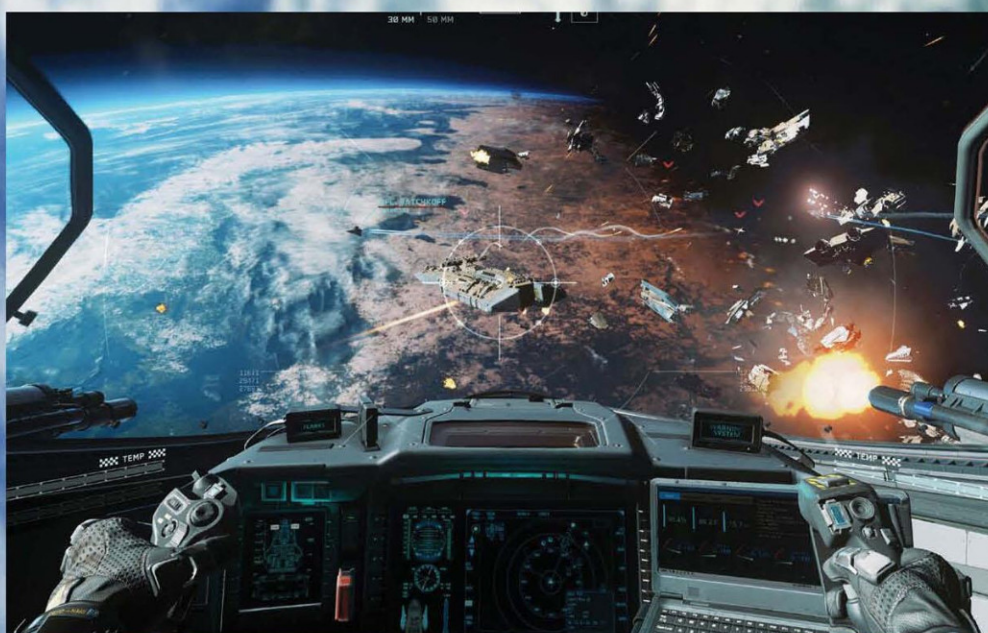
fan of his interesting approach to interactive storytelling, there are accusations of poor writing and unbelievable characters and events; for every piece of praise for the games' visuals, you'll see as many 'uncanny valley' complaints; for every captivating or emotional moment, an awkwardly crowbarred-in sex scene or Jason meme. It's really quite impressive, in its own intriguing kind of way.

With *Detroit*, though, Cage has solutions on-hand for many common complaints levelled at his games. Additional writers have been brought in to help flesh out characters and improve dialogue, but moreover, the game's setting also serves to act as a fail-safe – it's hard to complain about robotic animation, dead-eyed characters and awkward interactions when you're dealing with android characters, after all. Production line androids also present interesting possibilities in the event of failure on a gameplay level. While death in *Heavy Rain* would simply

write a character out of the story entirely, here we could see 'lost' characters replaced with factory setting originals with a different kind of impact on the bigger picture. There's so much potential in the setting, and much of it extend way beyond narrative intrigue.

The originally-revealed Kara – an android at odds with her kind's place in the world – has been joined by a second playable synthetic in Connor, a police model used in hostage negotiations. While Kara's story appears to show the reaction of the world to androids that questions their position and want more from their existence, here we get a different angle that explores how people treat even those who serve as intended. Which, it seems, is in pretty much the same hostile and cold manner. Expect more playable characters to be revealed before the game's release next year and prepare yourself for some ludicrous overarching narrative or a spectacular feat of shark-jumping... it is a David Cage game, after all.

DETROIT is currently dreaming of electric sheep in Quantic Dream's Paris studio. Head over to the website at quanticdream.com



ETA NOVEMBER | DEV INFINITYWARD | PUB ACTIVISION

Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare

Looking to the past to help build a better future



If you were to judge *Infinite Warfare* by its reveal alone, there's a good chance you wouldn't, couldn't see the appeal in *Call Of Duty*

shooting straight from the streets and into the stars. But by ignoring *Infinite Warfare* on principle, you'd be doing the game, Infinity Ward and – most importantly – yourself a huge disservice. This year's instalment looks incredible, and that isn't mere hyperbole but strategic assessment; what's not to love about fighting through space and taking command of your very own galactic armada?

Infinite Warfare might not look like your traditional *Call Of Duty* experience, but perhaps that isn't a negative and instead, something to be celebrated. If the last few instalments are anything to go by, it's clear something needed to change. This new format gives Infinity Ward the space to expand the typical gameplay experience; no longer are you a pawn in an army, but a leader. You'll take command of a group of soldiers, your very own customisable ship and a battle cruiser stationed on the edge of Earth's orbit.

Missions may begin on the streets of Earth, but battles often spin out into the skies. You'll jump in your ship and immediately engage in frantic dogfights through space, gunning down enemy ships and manoeuvring through debris. You can dock on larger ships, leaping out of the cockpit to engage enemies in zero gravity before taking the fight inside for classic close quarter battles. This is the *COD* that you've been playing for years, but it feels larger – its scale is bigger than anything we've seen from the franchise before.

While we are still yet to see multiplayer in action, the single-player is doing enough to get us excited. And for once, it isn't because of a ridiculous cast, but because it seems more immediate and innovative than ever. It's even ditching its linear shackles and introducing open elements to play, while gunplay looks quicker and more tactile. Infinity Ward is trying to inject some fresh blood into the franchise here, and we can't hate it for doing so.

CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE is Infinity Ward's attempt to defend the FPS crown. More here: callofduty.com





AOX As it's officially the Year Of The Grappling Hook, COD will be joining *Titanfall* in celebrating the art of dragging things and oneself around with a cord.

ETA 25 OCTOBER | PUB SONY | DEV GENDESIGN/JAPAN STUDIO

The Last Guardian

Beauty and the beast



■ The Last Guardian feels

lost in time. And yet, as archaic as it may be in many respects, there's something

refreshing about its economic approach to design in this era of gaming. Triple-A games have become bloated monsters, but that's what helps to make this project feel so special. There's no time-dominating open-world or busywork quest lines to distract, instead *The Last Guardian* boasts a pleasantly dated approach to architectural world

When *The Last Guardian* first entered development for PlayStation 3, the studio took a gamble with its limited resources. genDESIGN abandoned traditional motion-captured animations and ragdoll physics – the kind you see in almost every modern release – and decided to hand-craft every interaction between the characters and the world around them. Even with the increased power of the PS4 behind it, there are still a few event-triggers and camera problems that exist in the current build, but almost all of it can be

“TO THINK, WORK BEGAN ON THIS PROJECT THE SAME YEAR THAT ASSASSIN'S CREED, BIOSHOCK AND UNCHARTED ALL DEBUTED”

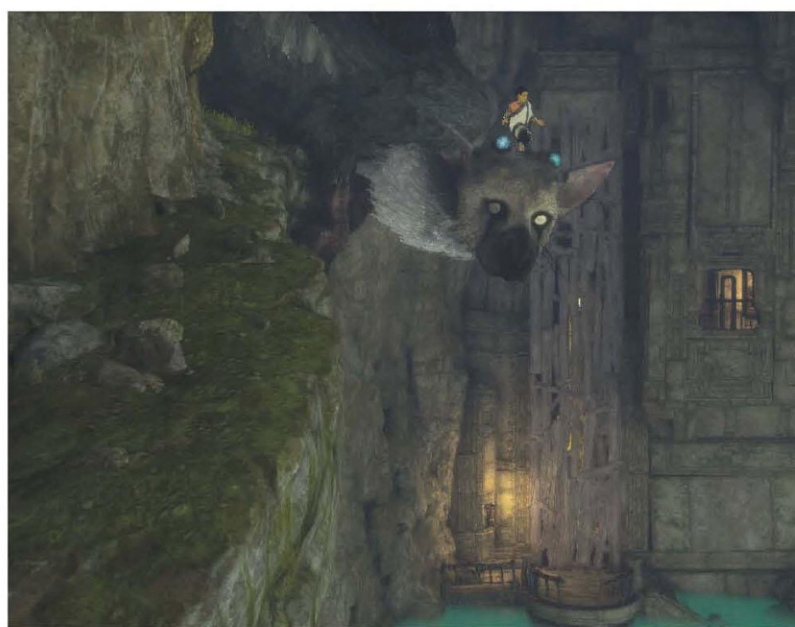
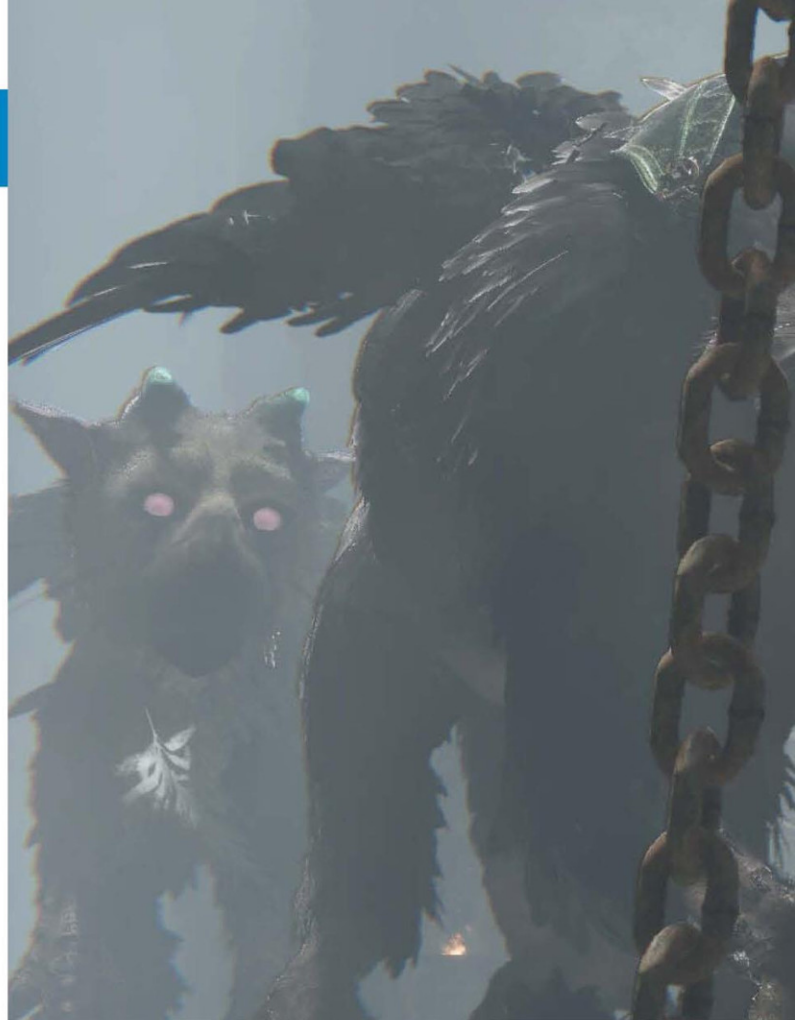
building. The restraint demonstrated from Ueda in *The Last Guardian* ensures all focus is on a boy and his beast, on their interactions through a foreign land and the incredible animations that bring it all to life.

It isn't the scale (as impressive as it may be) of Trico that sticks with you, nor is it the staggering detail found in the 3D environments or even the clever navigational and environmental puzzles, but the humanity captured through those animations where *The Last Guardian* comes into its own. More so than any gameplay mechanic or system, the bond between Trico and the boy is the star. The emotion and heart behind this story is told almost entirely in silent interaction, the punctured shrieks of Trico doing far more to build character than any narration or exposition ever could. It's brought to life by clever design cues, such as the beasts' eyes changing colour with his mood or reading the ever-so slight shift in movement and momentum between the two heroes; the simplest of interactions make the biggest statements in *The Last Guardian*.

forgiven – there aren't many games that feel as human, as honest, as *The Last Guardian* and its intentions.

To think, work began on this project the same year that *Assassin's Creed*, *BioShock* and *Uncharted* all debuted. Franchises that all sought to go bigger – becoming louder, or more grandiose with every subsequent instalment – and yet, here we are, quietly appreciating the nuance behind *The Last Guardian*'s little flourishes. Whether it can meet or even hope to surpass expectation is largely irrelevant now, because whether it succeeds or fails to achieve its goals, nothing can divert attention from the reality that *The Last Guardian* is of a dying breed of design; where story and character aren't just a couple of things to tick off on a marketing checklist but are at the very heart and soul of a gaming experience.

THE LAST GUARDIAN is a real thing that actually exists. Seriously, it's got a website and everything! See? It's right here: bit.ly/29oJimu



AOXI The weight of expectation is clearly heavy around the neck of *The Last Guardian*, given the team's track record.



BEAST MODE

You might not be able to directly speak with... well, whatever that thing is meant to be, but that doesn't mean you can't communicate with it. We've seen various instances where it can be called to the boy by presenting food or something or interest, though not all interactions will be so mercenary – as you develop a bond with the creature, whether by defending or guiding it or simply making yourself known as an ally rather than a threat, a relationship will develop between the two that means they always have one another's backs. We'll be intrigued to see if this works the other way, though – imagine the gameplay ramifications if you really manage to piss it off somehow...

AOXI After wading through development hell alongside his pet project for the better part of a decade, Fumito Ueda is finally ready to deliver what will no doubt be his most divisive title yet.



BIGGER APPLE

Manhattan has been done to death in superhero games already, but we doubt there are many studios that could make it look as pretty as this...

ETA 2017 | PUB SONY | DEV INSOMNIAC GAMES

Spider-Man

Does whatever Insomniac can



The first thing to know about *Spider-Man* is that the rather exciting trailer from E3 was actually made up of in-game footage.

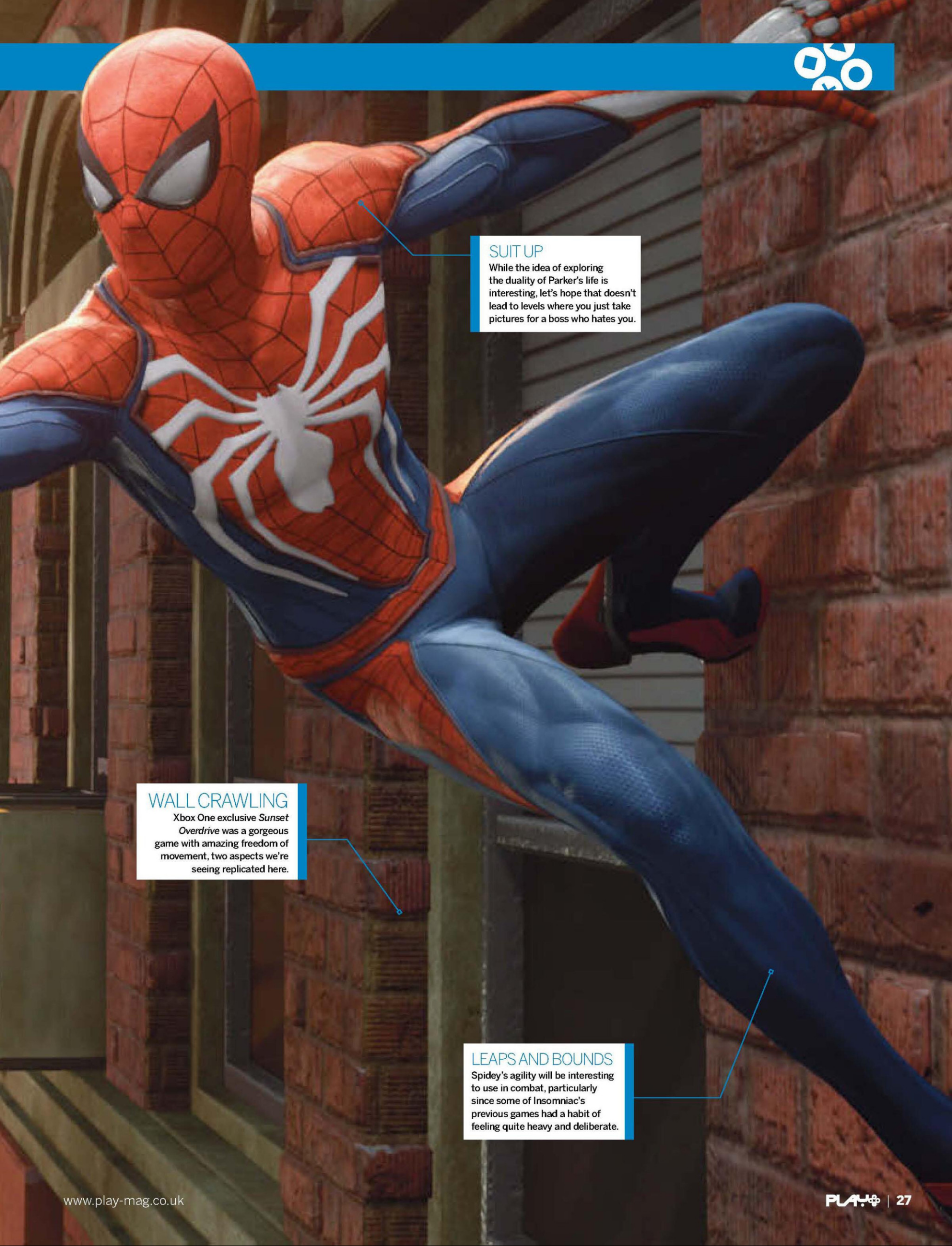
Scenes of Spidey parkouring his way through a coffee shop, for instance, are said to be directly from the PS4 exclusive. Insomniac has made the decision to set this adventure a little later in Peter Parker's life, avoiding the need for an origin story (it's not like there's anyone left on the planet that doesn't know that by now, right?) and giving us access to a more experienced and better equipped Peter Parker than we've seen in quite some time.

What that also shows us is that this can be a story set around the most interesting and rich element of the character's life; how Parker balances being Spider-Man with his normal existence. Insomniac has recalled how Marvel's games head Bill Roseman explained this line of thinking when discussion for this game first began, and that's been the guiding interest from then on. It's also something that the studio has already tackled to a degree, with themes of humanity also present in the *Resistance* games.

And what *that* all means is we're likely to go on a journey with the wall-crawler in a similar way to how Rocksteady introduced Batman in *Arkham Asylum*. He knows how to fight, he knows how to move and he knows how to be a hero. All you have to do is show you can harness all of those abilities and fight crime around New York. The team has proven itself to be more than capable with sprawling settings, so hopes are high for the best web-slinging action since movie tie-in *Spider-Man 2* on PS2.

And as for the costume... well, it's still splitting opinion, but Insomniac promises there's a story behind it. We're still hoping there might be some costume changing or upgrading options in the game to switch it out – we'd love to get some Scarlet Spider action going. But however you feel about Spidey's new look, the decision to distance this from the cinematic universe by making the suit look different is certainly a smart one. As a new story for ol' Webhead, the last thing it needs is comparisons to constant movie reboots...

SPIDER-MAN is swinging around New York with the heroes at Insomniac Games. Internet sense tingling: insomniacgames.com



SUIT UP

While the idea of exploring the duality of Parker's life is interesting, let's hope that doesn't lead to levels where you just take pictures for a boss who hates you.

WALL CRAWLING

Xbox One exclusive *Sunset Overdrive* was a gorgeous game with amazing freedom of movement, two aspects we're seeing replicated here.

LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Spidey's agility will be interesting to use in combat, particularly since some of Insomniac's previous games had a habit of feeling quite heavy and deliberate.

ETA Q1 2017 | PUB DEEP SILVER | DEV VOLITION ENTERTAINMENT

Agents Of Mayhem

Volition moves from Saints Row to GI Joe



Saints Row developer

Volition found itself with a

conundrum: how does one of the most experienced studios in the industry follow up a smash

hit like *Saints Row IV*? Well, it has decided to change things up and go a different route with *Agents Of Mayhem*. The humor of *Saints Row* remains intact, but this is a brand new action game that focuses more on teamwork than just causing chaos.

The team known as the Agents consists of twelve unique soldiers each with their own abilities, attack styles, strengths, and weaknesses. A hands-on demo gave us access to four of those, allowing us to choose three of them in order to make up a team. First in the group is Hollywood, a TV star turned secret agent that wields an assault rifle for mid-range combat. Next is Fortune, a tech expert and sky pirate that dual wields energy guns. Third is the bruising hulk known as Hardtack, a naval officer that specializes in getting in an enemy's face before blowing it to bits. The last playable hero is Rama, an archer and healer that is most effective with distance between her and the enemies.

The most important part of playing through *Agents Of Mayhem* is matching these characters together in a way that creates a balanced team, as the game allows for switching between the characters on the fly. We spent most of the demo using Hollywood's mid-range rifle to keep enemies at bay, and then quickly switching to Hardtack should any enemies get too close for comfort. Rama's bow is perfect for quick headshots, while Fortune's speed makes her an efficient killer. Each agent uniquely reacts to each situation as well – we heard two completely different sets of dialogue from one playthrough to another.

Agents Of Mayhem is not *Saints Row* and some fans of Volition may immediately find that disappointing, but selling this new game short based on that would be selling it *extremely* short. Trademark Volition attitude and sense of humour is carried over, meaning there are plenty of one-liners flying around to put a smile on the player's face. These all-new agents of Mayhem are ready to report for duty, and their time will come when the game launches in 2017. And don't worry – there will obviously be more *Saints Row* another day...

AGENTS OF MAYHEM is the *Saints Row* stunt double we never knew we wanted or needed – cheers, Volition! More here: aomthegame.com



AOXO Hollywood's special plays right into his TV persona, blowing enemies away while making him a "tough guy walking away from explosions."





"AGENTS OF MAYHEM IS NOT SAINTS ROW AND SOME FANS OF VOLITION MAY IMMEDIATELY FIND THAT DISAPPOINTING"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ A crazy cast of characters, all with their own unique powers and abilities.
- It's as knowingly stupid and playful as the best Saints Row games have been.
- ✕ It channels character shooters like *Battleborn* and *Overwatch*, despite being single-player only.
- *Gat Out Of Hell* was pretty awful, so it's probably best to give the Saints a break.

AOX A new and futuristic take on Seoul, South Korea serves as the main backdrop for the *Agents Of Mayhem* story.



PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 PREY

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2017

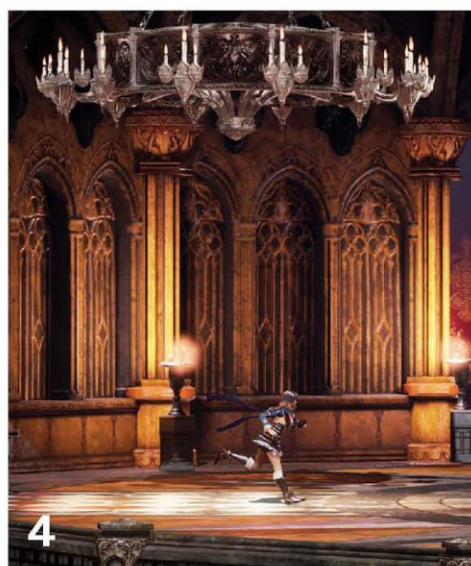
THIS SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED IP revival is shaping up to be a sickeningly slick blend of *System Shock*, *Dead Space* and *The Thing*, a psychological horror *Groundhog Day* where mysterious space station experiments see Morgan relive the same harrowing cycle of drinking disgusting coffee and shotgunning alien creatures on loop. Of course, there's more than meets the eye here, though. Nothing is quite as it seems and this will work well with the huge, multi-tiered, player-led open spaces *Dishonored* is known for. Bethesda has assured us that Arkane has 'broken the franchise down to its core concept' though we are seeing very little of that here. With the *BioShock*, *Dead Space* and *System Shock* franchises all MIA, though, we're desperate for a fluid, violent and challenging sci-fi game, so here's hoping *Prey* can fill the void.

2 GWENT

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

NO ONE WHO played the card game in *The Witcher III* will be the least bit surprised to see it get an expanded standalone release. It was one of many highlights in CDPR's award-winning RPG and deserving of greater development. The team has dived back into what was supposed to be a relatively simple experience and built upon it, expanding the gameplay and giving it more competitive depth. The systems of the game will remain the same, with the ten cards you get to start a match being the only ones you'll have available to you through each contest. Each deck has been given more specialisations (Northern Realms is now more siege-focused, for instance) and many new cards have been added to include elements from the entire trilogy. Many cards will also now feature new bonuses, such as Muster – which holds cards on the field between rounds – as well as other neat abilities.



3 FINAL FANTASY XV

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

IT'S FAIR TO say that *FFXV*'s combat has come on a fair way since the original *Episode Duscae* demo. The latest feature to be added has pleased many franchise fans who thought the action combat was a stretch further than they were comfortable with – Wait mode is back, and it's even more useful than ever. While the original ATB version of Wait mode would kick in as soon as it was your turn to act, here it's something that is triggered manually. While the action is frozen, you can trigger actions for both Noctis and his bros, effectively offering the kind of control over the full party it always felt like we were missing before. With only a few months left until launch, there's evidently still a fair amount of optimisation to be done, though...

4 BLOODSTAINED: RITUAL OF THE NIGHT

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2017

LOOKING FOR YOUR *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night* fix? The Kickstarter for Koji Igarashi's – the visionary behind the franchise – spiritual successor has finally become playable and the results are positive. *Ritual Of The Night*, having absolutely annihilated its crowdfunding target a while back, feels extremely solid, its world vibrant and, as you may expect, pretty darn challenging. The PC demo was only made available to backers but as we'd pledged for a retail PS4 copy, we were able to give it a whirl. It absolutely nails the feel and tone of classic *Castlevania* titles, with various direct nods such as the ability to absorb the souls of monsters and use their powers adding a real sense of depth to the action. In IGA we trust, for nobody knows this formula better.

ROUNDUP



5 DEATH STRANDING

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2017

HIDEO KOJIMA HAS been making it clear that players should be expecting an action game in the tradition of the *Metal Gear Solid* series, but not a stealth game. In fact, he's drawn comparisons to how he feels *MGS* only came to be known as 'stealth' after people found a label for it. He claims *Death Stranding* will be similarly innovative and may need new categorisation as a result. Inspired by author Kōbō Abe, Kojima has talked about humankind's first invention being the stick, a tool and weapon, and the second being rope, something that ties things together and connects us. Images of the umbilical cord in the teaser speak to the theme of connecting, while those handcuffs offer a different interpretation as something that binds us.



6



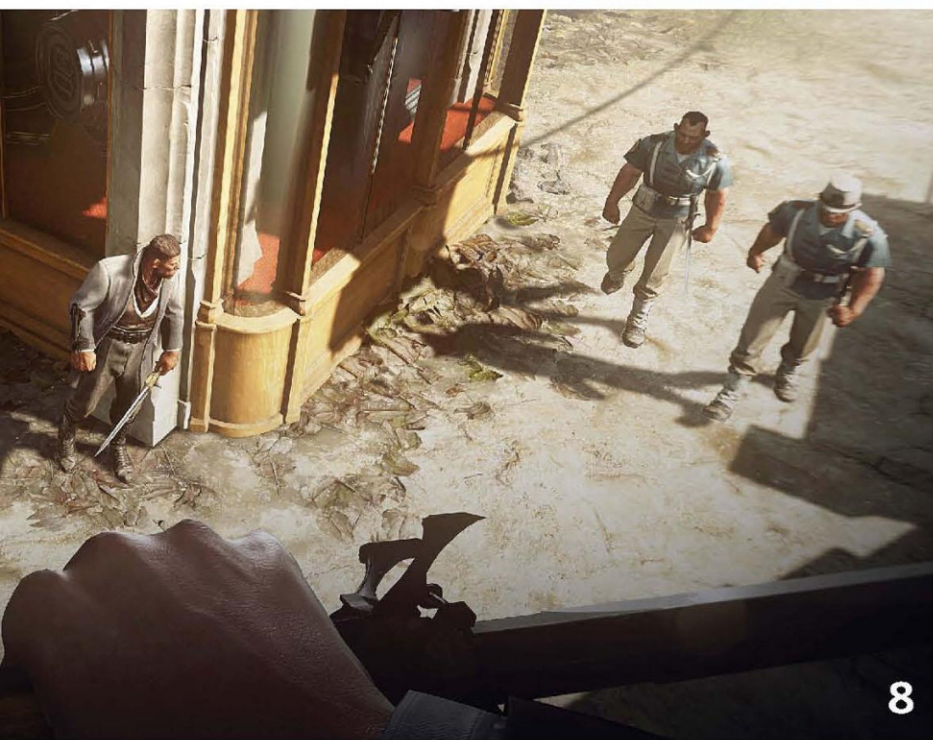
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7 DESTINY: RISE OF IRON

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

SINCE IT LOOKS as though Bungie would rather leave the proper sequel in the oven for a little longer yet (probably a decent idea, given how content-light the original was at launch), we'll be seeing in Year Three of the divisive shooter with another huge expansion. New areas, missions, gear and enemy types are promised as we learn more about the Lords Of Iron, with the allure of a brand new Raid likely to be enough to get lapsed players to wake up their Guardians for another trip to the Tower. We're definitely up for giving our old buddy Saladin a hand, but we're not quite so sure how we feel about the impending return of the Gjallarhorn – it trivialised content before, so hopefully Bungie can keep it in check this time.



8

6 RESIDENT EVIL 7

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: JANUARY

FANS HAVE BEEN calling for *Resi* to return to its survival horror roots for years now, so it's unclear whether Capcom hasn't been able to hear them over the sound of people doing Barry Burton impressions... or perhaps if this new first-person approach is actually a lot smarter and more faithful to the PlayStation classics than it first appears. It's certainly a return to a more restrictive camera angle, while the team's statements about how there will be fewer foes but they will feel more dangerous again falls in line with early games. We've seen inventory management within limited space return too, so there's plenty of what made the original games so good set to come back in place of the action-heavy gameplay the series got carried away with. Oh, and it has PSVR support too, if you're brave enough for it.

8 DISHONORED 2

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2016

ARKANE HAS BEEN showing off a mission entitled A Crack In The Slab, in which you are able to use a device to travel back and forth through time within an abandoned manor. Using this mechanic, you can travel around the location without disturbance in the current time and traverse ruined areas in the past. What's more, with the help of a device that shows you the other timeline on some glass, you can perform stealth kills by hopping in and out of the past. It's a stunning new idea. In a great piece of news for gamers who like to punish themselves, though, Arkane is also adding a mode called 'Flesh and Steel', which deactivates all of your powers and means you have to survive on your wits and weapons alone. This is likely to be the way of playing the game that the more hardcore among us will push ourselves to complete, whatever it takes.



FIFA 17 HYPED FOR STORY MODE?

 **twitter**
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

Now when you say *FIFA 17* Story Mode... Do you mean *Final Fantasy X*?

@BUFFWOTO

That *FIFA 17* new story mode is exactly what I wanted. Ever since *NBA 2K* did it. So glad for a got onto it. Definite purchase now.

@CFMAGEE

wow "The Journey" on *FIFA 17* looks unreal... as long as you don't have to sign for United of course

@1COREYJAMES

FIFA 17 has a story mode? Stupid idea i think, they should work on improving the career mode first

@STEVO_M

If you play the Journey on *FIFA 17* with Southampton, do you automatically get overpriced and sold to Liverpool?

@SAMYATES_LFC

Can't wait for *FIFA 17*. I'd like to play the journey mode to have a feel of a professional player's life...

@PETERASOWAH

Thought it was all jokes when people said the *FIFA 17* story mode is like *GTA*; turns out they weren't lying. It's too much.

@KRYPTIKNIGHT

the Alex Hunter thing on *FIFA 17* is literally Rashford's story

@BENTHEROVER97

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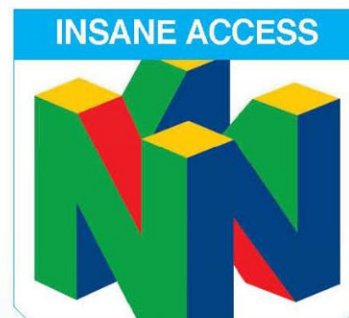
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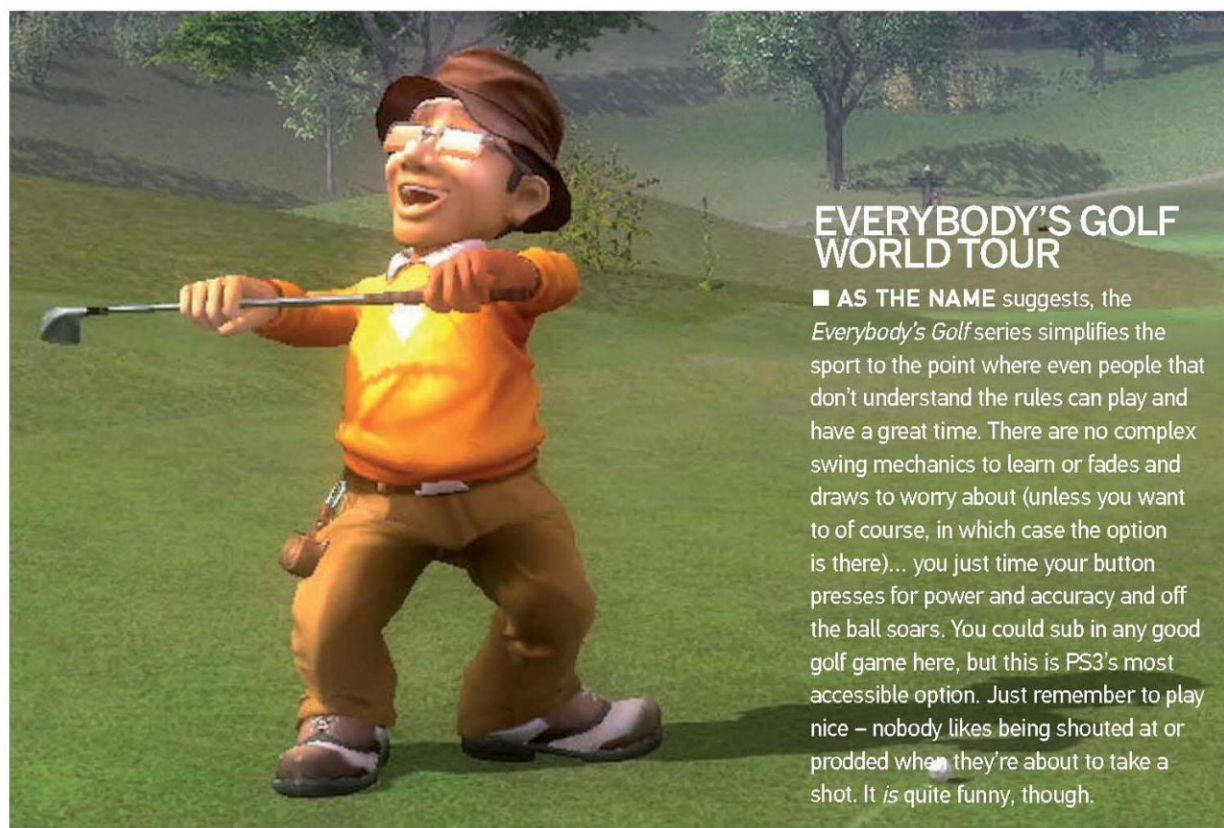
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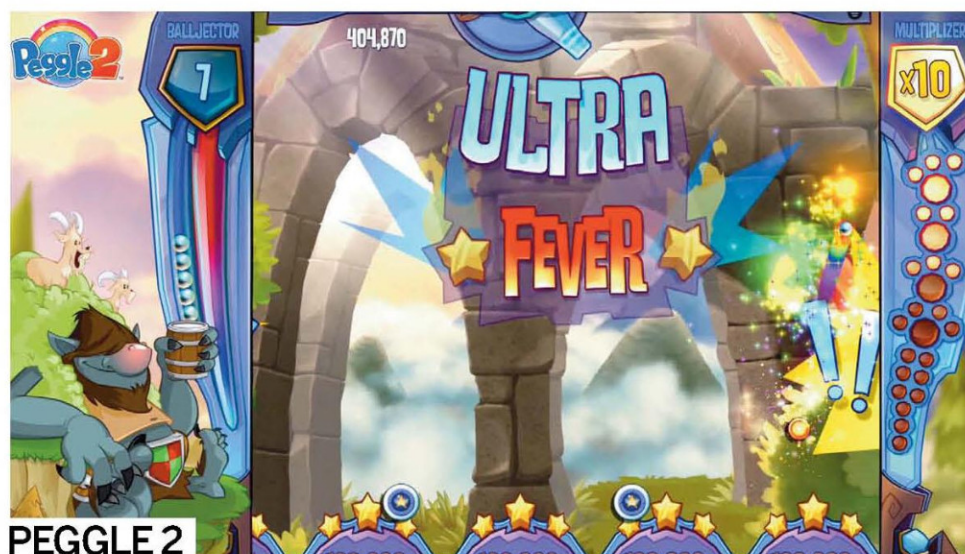
WORMS

■ **ONE OF THE** greatest local multiplayer experiences ever, *Worms* is an essential ingredient in any couch gaming fan's collection. Steer clear of the 3D ones – they're a bit rubbish, for the most part – but you can't go wrong with pretty much any of the classic 2D ones. There's nothing quite like reading the wind just right to swing a perfect bazooka shot into an enemy's stupid wormy face...



EVERYBODY'S GOLF WORLD TOUR

■ **AS THE NAME** suggests, the *Everybody's Golf* series simplifies the sport to the point where even people that don't understand the rules can play and have a great time. There are no complex swing mechanics to learn or fades and draws to worry about (unless you want to of course, in which case the option is there)... you just time your button presses for power and accuracy and off the ball soars. You could sub in any good golf game here, but this is PS3's most accessible option. Just remember to play nice – nobody likes being shouted at or prodded when they're about to take a shot. It is quite funny, though.



PEGGLE 2

■ **AH, PEGGLE** – THE perfect way to unwind after a session of more stressful and intensive multiplayer games. While not exactly steeped in decent multiplayer options, there's nothing to stop you simply passing the pad among you

between rounds or even between shots – the latter effectively turns it into a makeshift co-op mode while the former becomes all about gunning for the most ridiculous trick shots possible to try and wow your mates.



PURE POOL

■ **BOASTING THE SHINIEST** balls you're likely to find in a PS4 game, *Pure Pool* is about as good a recreation of belting spherical objects around a fabric-coated table as you'll ever play. Controls aren't too tricky either, meaning those who find that they can read the angles in a real game but never make the actual shots (hello!) will be in their element.

SUPER MEAT BOY

■ **WHILE IT ISN'T** nice to revel in the misery and failure of others, it's sort of okay when that's exactly what the game was designed to do to the player. Whether you pass the controller to a friend to see if they can get you through a particularly tricky stage, agree to swap after every death (that's gonna be one quick game of pad ping-pong) or even do entire worlds each if you're good enough, games like *Super Meat Boy* and *N++* are awesome with company. Just do yourselves a favour and don't add booze into the mix – we speak from experience when we say that *Super Meat Boy* drinking games get even messier than the game's blood-soaked levels.



ZEN PINBALL 2

■ **GIVEN THAT IT'S** free to download with a single table (and that most of the DLC ones are excellent), there's no reason for this not to be on your hard drive. While most of our time goes into trying to sink the high scores set by the pinball wizards on our friend lists, the game also supports local multiplayer where players get to take turns shooting for ramps and jackpots, just as you can on most real life pinball tables. The crazy videogame shenanigans that couldn't be done on a real table make it interesting, too – you may find that other players trigger modes you've never seen before!



TRIALS FUSION

■ **IT'S ALL TOO** easy to be a backseat gamer while watching someone else play something like *Trials*, as even when played really well, it's made to look so effortless. There's nothing quite like countering the sneers and jeers of onlookers with a calm 'Go on, then – you do it!' as you hand them the pad and watch them put the poor rider through a living nightmare, like *Groundhog Day* only with extreme sports accidents. If you want to be a bit more civil, just play one track each and pass the pad, which works especially well when trying out new community-built levels.



JUST CAUSE 3

■ **INSERT YOUR FAVOURITE** open world game into this slot, whether it's *GTA*, *Saints Row* or whatever – we only picked *Just Cause* as it has more or less the best potential for causing mayhem. Games like these work surprisingly well in a pass-the-pad environment, as friends tend to try things you may never have thought of or end up in areas you've never seen, and there's always a need to one-up them when you get the pad back. What will you blow up next?



DJ HERO

■ **WITH ITS OUTLANDISH** controller terrifying most players who have never held one before, what better approach than that of safety in numbers when trying to tackle the mighty *DJ Hero*? You can't fail tracks so they'll carry on no matter how badly you play – they'll just be missing a few bits if you mess up your taps, scratches and fades. Watching a master at work is oddly hypnotic, especially when you see the finger gymnastics their hands are doing...



RIBBIT KING

■ **A SECOND GOLF** game on the list might seem like a bit of a cop-out, but this isn't really a golf game – it's a Frolf game, and it's the best one ever made. With so many seemingly random elements kicking off after you've pinged your frog down the course, there are always plenty of laughs to be had with multiplayer *Ribbit King*. Amazingly, there is actually a fair amount of skill to the game, too – clever use of items can lead to some crazy Frog-In-One shots.

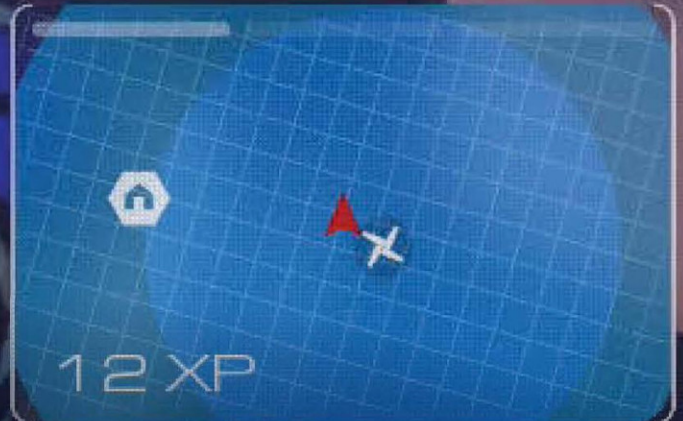


"WHEN IT COMES TO
COMBAT, CATALYST GRINDS
TO AN UNSATISFYING HALT"



K-SEC
ALERTED

EVASIVE THREAT
GET OUT OF SIGHT



Mirror's Edge: Catalyst

A leap of faith



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
EA

DEVELOPER
DICE

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
16+



It's easy to lose faith in an open world, especially one as sterile as *The City Of Glass*, as obstinately gorgeous as

it may be. There is an essential banality to *Mirror's Edge: Catalyst's* core design, the structure of its space at continuous odds with its gameplay ambitions. Developer DICE may look to reaffirm the belief that allowing the player to do whatever they want – whenever they want to do it – is necessary to compete in the adventure gaming space in 2016, though the resulting experience is one that stumbles far more frequently than it soars.

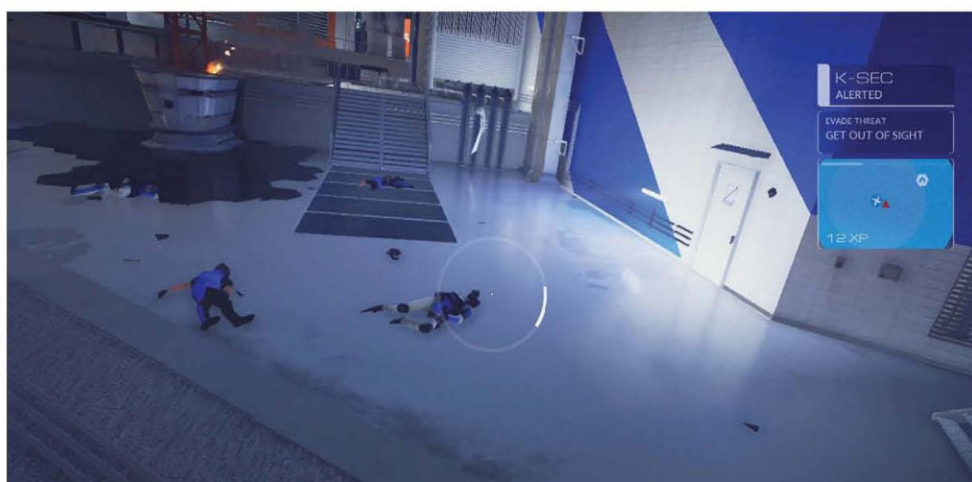
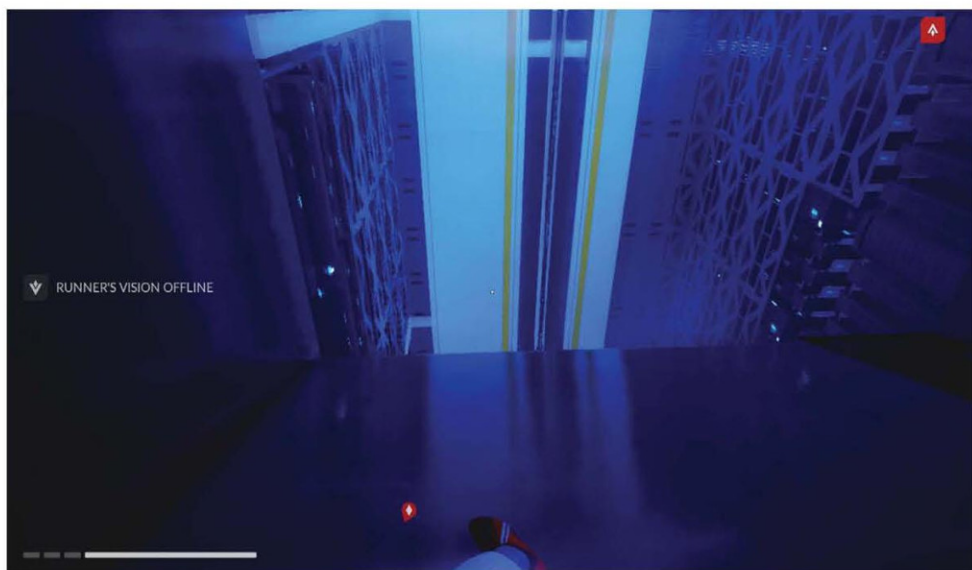
The original *Mirror's Edge* was a celebration of the critical path. Stark colours and straight lines: that was all it took to get DICE's deeply divisive game embedded in the minds of millions. Admittedly, it may have served better as a proof-of-concept demonstration more than a game actually fit for release – a series of serious flaws actively worked against its elegance. But *Mirror's Edge* captured the hearts

and attention of a generation hungry for new experiences, especially amongst the endless rafts of shooters arriving in 2008. And so we collectively demanded more – more of Faith, of an open-world and the freedom to explore the uncluttered rooftops at our leisure. Eight years have passed and DICE has delivered on these demands, yet eight years later, we can't help but wish the studio had never listened to our cries. *Catalyst* acts as a stark reminder that the only thing we are ever really entitled to as fans of a franchise is a memory of it.

Here we are, overlooking *The City Of Glass* from its most nausea-inducing position, teetering on the edge of a skyscraper, as we desperately attempt to ignore the NPCs incessantly whining about some totalitarian social injustice or another – one that can only be stopped by delivering parcels to patrons of the city that dwell on its cascading rooftops. Instead, we are keeping our attention locked on a ribbon floating off across the antiseptic environments. Everything it touches splashed in red; a runner vision beacon that removes

the thrill of exploration, but provides a helping hand across *Catalyst's* many impossible leaps and landings. The visual language of *Mirror's Edge* is as strong as it ever has been, a unique approach to spatial navigation when compared to just about everything else in the industry. But it's the play (not the look) that *Mirror's Edge* built its notoriety around and *Catalyst* does a pretty solid job of making you freer than you ever have been in a videogame.

The first-person parkour from the original game returns essentially unaltered. What it lacks in depth, it makes up in form and spirit. *Mirror's Edge* has a habit of betraying you with its simplicity, the perspective shift distracting from the fact that you're still navigating everything with a push forward of the analogue stick and the press of a single button. Ultimately, it requires little more skill than, say, *Assassin's Creed* – though timing can be the difference between life, death and coming to a total, frustrating standstill. In spite of this, it's liberating to move so freely across a space. It's often awe-inspiring and exciting,



AOX It has been eight years since *Mirror's Edge* and for the ages it didn't look like EA would green light a sequel. Perhaps it shouldn't have given in.



even if traversal does begin to quickly stagnate as a result of *Catalyst's* boring mission, narrative and world design.

Mirror's Edge was linear, almost to a fault. You moved through levels, comfortable in the knowledge that every environment was a puzzle to be conquered, an occasional time trial ready to test your understanding of its navigation systems – even if it ran out of steam before it had a chance to conclude. *Catalyst*, on the other hand, struggles to convert this central hook of fluid motion and momentum into its newfound sprawling game world in an engaging fashion.

Like most open world games, open up your map after a few hours of play and you'll be accosted by a mess of icons: a time trial here, a collectable there; billboards to hack and a side-missions to complete over there. You can even create your own challenges, shared and played by the masses via *Catalyst's* asynchronous multiplayer element. At a glance, there's plenty of content here – it's just a crying shame that almost all of it is crushingly repetitive.

DICE has clearly done its best to respond to the criticism levied at the original game's narrative, removing the animated cutscenes entirely and making some attempt to tell a more personal story for the once again

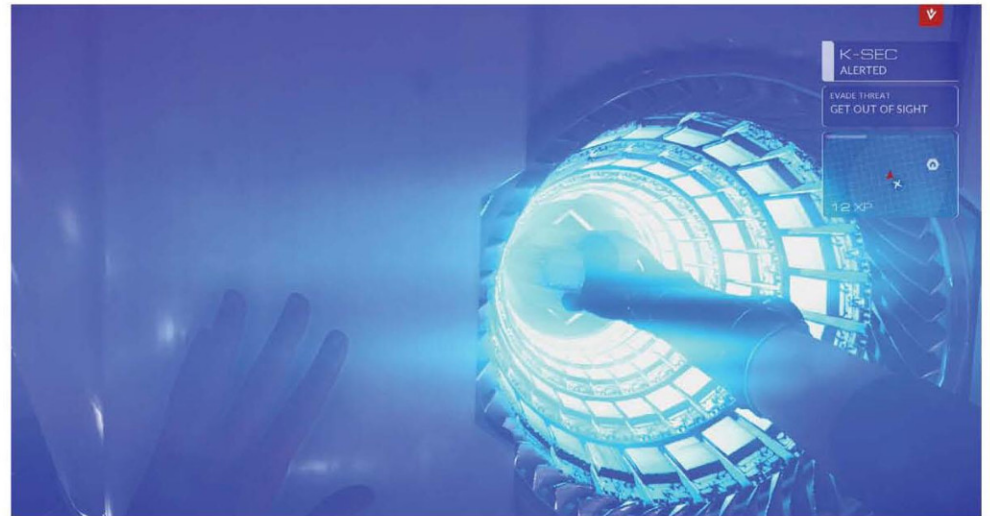
underdeveloped Faith. Ultimately, though, it's still as mind-numbingly dull. The story itself is overblown and side-quests aren't much better either. Even the simple act of making a delivery for an NPC can be aggressively intrusive, their inescapable lines of dialogue and ranting a distraction as you attempt to jump and slide your way to a delivery point against the clock. You'll quickly find yourself distancing yourself from certain mission types to avoid coming into contact with NPCs entirely, but that then has a catastrophic affect on progression.

DICE has made some strange concessions with the migration of *Mirror's Edge* into a bland open-world structure. While you can now delight in smooth free running across the map without restraint, many of Faith's basic parkour abilities are locked behind an upgrade tree. That means that a move as integral as the 180-degree turn or double wall run is kept out of reach until you have enough EXP to unlock it – a needless change. The game goes to great lengths to set up the notion that Faith is a parkour master – a legend in the city – but shatters the illusion almost instantly by gating off such integral, fundamental abilities.

Catalyst's newfound structure just doesn't sit well with the gameplay loop DICE is so clearly,

passionately trying to build. There are only so many ways and times you can climb the same drainpipe or ladder as you head back to a safe house; only so many rooftops to run and leap across to before you begin craving structured challenge. The game is largely unpopulated, lacking signs of real humanity or emotion – there's a crushing lack of variety to the various hubs, every area looking like the one you've just sprinted through. It's lonely when you're running free on the top of the world, and it isn't long before you begin to feel oddly dissociated from the space you are occupying.

There are flashes of greatness of what could have been, though. There's one line of side quests, the Grid Node puzzles, which are removed from the banality of open world that instantly delight. They are pure platforming challenges; brainteasers that force you to use your understanding of traversal to navigate spaces not fit for human feet. It's here where *Catalyst* settles into a rhythm, not unlike the structured scenes witnessed in the original *Mirror's Edge's* best missions. You are asked to use everything at your disposal to make death-defying leaps across complicated catwalks and around security lasers. It's during these missions that DICE sets the parameters of challenge, leaning on its mastery of level design to make *Catalyst* feel as it should: effortlessly cool, exciting and stomach-churning all at once. A game such as *Mirror's Edge* lives and dies on



AOX *Mirror's Edge: Catalyst* may have a lot of flaws, but it does still feel great to navigate its spaces in first-person.

“CATALYST IS AT ITS ABSOLUTE BEST WHEN INTEGRATING ATHLETICISM INTO ITS NATURAL FLOW”

its level design, and it's an aspect of the game that became a casualty to structure shift.

You will often encounter levels built as grand puzzles separated from the main hub during critical story missions as well. While they are considerably larger than any scenarios you may have seen in the original game, they fail on two fairly fundamental levels that speak of larger flaws in DICE's vision. Not only do they force you to interact directly and constantly with an array of aggressively unlikable characters and plot lines, but its enjoyable traversal puzzles almost always end in large scenes of violence.

When it comes to combat, *Catalyst* grinds to an unsatisfying halt. DICE has, thankfully, removed Faith's ability to wield weapons, though it has introduced a melee system that isn't worth a damn. During occasions where the security gates come crashing down – where you are locked in rooms with groups of enemies – the combat system essentially breaks down, forcing you to mash buttons in a flail of disembodied hands and feet until your assailants crumble to the floor in an embarrassingly lifeless fashion. Connecting punches and kicks has very little

kinetic feedback, making Faith feel (again) disconnected from the space she is inhabiting.

When combat finds you in the open world, it's handled a little more intuitively. The more momentum you build the faster your Runner's Shield builds, making it harder for enemies to damage you as long as you're on the run. It encourages you to keep moving, to avoid combat and use the environment to escape conflict and it feels great to lose a cavalcade of armoured goons by taking a leap of faith, triggering a roll just in time to land safely and disappearing off into the distance. Why, then, does it put you in scenarios where you can't run? Where you don't have enough space to gain momentum or use the environment to your advantage? Direct combat is so weightless and boring, it's a wonder it – and the scenes of wave-based survival it brings – ever made it into the game to begin with.

Catalyst is at its best when it is integrating a sense of athleticism into its natural flow, as it empowers the player to take chances and revel in the danger and spectacle of free running. It's a shame, then, that its best moments are almost

entirely undone by the open world environment. The sense of challenge, the accuracy and sense of precision that makes the series feel so daring becomes a casualty of DICE's need to pander to players. The open spaces must be easy to navigate, lest players fall and fail. They might get lost, frustrated. This comes together to make Faith quickly feel like less of a parkour legend, but more like a clumsy runner that just so happens to haphazardly frequent its rooftops.

Mirror's Edge was a fantastic technical demonstration back in 2008, highlighting a cool concept and impressive new technology. Ultimately, given the sense of pace it imbued the player with, we shouted and screamed for it to go into an open world. We wanted freedom and exploration, collectibles and the like. DICE listened, clearly. But it shouldn't have. *Mirror's Edge*'s best mechanics and systems are better served in smaller, limited environmental spaces. *Catalyst* has some wonderful ideas and there are times where it'll make you feel truly free, but it fails to maintain its momentum for more than a few minutes at time.

VERDICT

FAILS TO FIND ITS FLOW OR RHYTHM

6

PlayMag_UK scored 6 for
Mirror's Edge: Catalyst

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



K0016 HITS360

1:18:19



Jedi Master

You have earned a trophy!



"AS A BOSS RUSH GAME,
MECHANICS NEED TO BE ON POINT,
AND THEY ABSOLUTELY ARE"

Ha Ha Ha



Furi

When it's time to parry, we will parry hard



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
The Game Bakers
DEVELOPER
In-House
PSN PRICE
£19.99
PLAYERS
1



Platinum might be pretty much untouchable in the modern character action field, but that doesn't mean it can't and shouldn't

be challenged. Ninja Theory and Team Ninja continue to throw down with the master from time to time, but it's even more exciting to see a skilled challenger come out of nowhere – we saw it with Ivent's *Strength Of The Sword* 3 a few years back (which, confusingly, isn't actually a sequel) and we see it again now with The Game Bakers' superb *Furi*.

As a boss rush game, mechanics need to be absolutely on point, and they are. Options are limited – you have a slash, a dodge and a ranged shot (all of which can be charged) plus a parry, and that's about it – but that pushes execution to the fore, with most attack patterns demanding precise spacing or timing as you dance around incoming shots and blows looking for a chance to counter. It's not until the brutal Furi difficulty that you really start to see just how far this system can be pushed, with all kinds of cancels, option selects and buffering techniques possible so long as your hands can keep up. The phase-based fights allow the game to

teach you individual attacks and tells before throwing it all together in chaotic later phases, providing both a great sense of escalation and more complex mechanics than would be manageable had it not built up to them first.

Battles are intense, then, but what happens between might not be to everyone's tastes – it's literally just a case of walking extremely slowly (or pressing a button to do so automatically) through stylised landscapes while listening to some exceptional music and bunny-headed oddball The Voice spit riddles about the lore and bosses. Downtime between fights is welcome, but this method has proven divisive, especially since these sections can't be skipped on subsequent story playthroughs (except on Speedrun mode). Still, the boss battles are exceptional and given how integral they are to the experience, it's safe to say that *Furi* is a stylish and satisfying success overall.

VERDICT

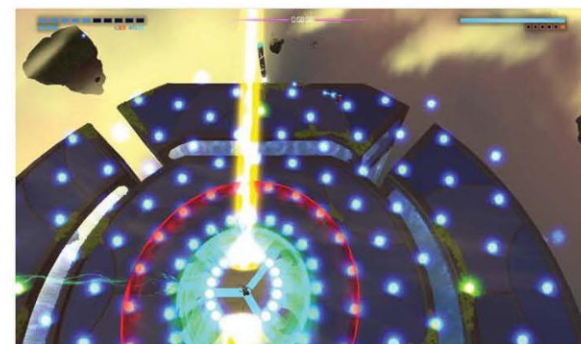
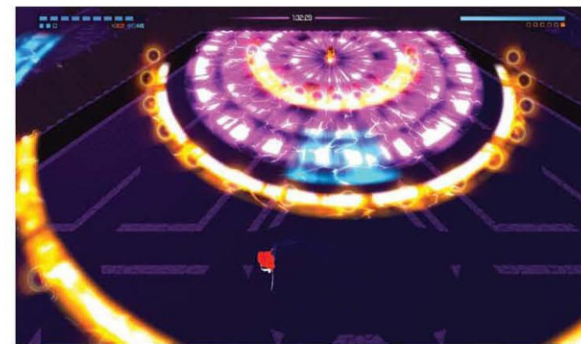
A TIGHT AND EMPOWERING BOSS RUSH



PlayMag_UK scored 8 for Furi

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

ΔOXΔ With nods to PlatinumGames, intense melee combat, a killer soundtrack and overwhelming bullet hell sections, *Furi* is a better advert for *Nier Automata* than anything Square is likely to do to promote its upcoming niche game...





ilverk



Hakon



The Banner Saga 2

Stoic's epic quest grinds onwards and upwards

AOXO Thankfully, gameplay is solid enough to let this sequel do justice to its absolutely beautiful art style.



Thankfully, *The Banner Saga 2* picks up immediately after the thrilling events of the original. Here you are on a mighty adventure, leading

a band of fighters, scavengers and terrified refugees as they flee from the invading Dredge, a vast army of demonic, murderous stone warriors. Yes, fans of the first game, it's still classic fantasy fare, wrapped up in a tactical RPG format and presented in an utterly breathtaking art style, and it's still just as captivating.

The beautiful adventure has you primarily dealing with an almost constant stream of text-based decisions as the intricate and wonderfully-written story unfolds. Your decisions don't appear to affect the main arc of the story a great deal, but can have major short-term consequences as you try to manage supplies, the training of fighters, the promotion of hero characters and the day-to-day challenges you face during the many perils of your journey.

Rarely are the decisions you face black and white in nature. And, as you strive to make the best decisions for your camp, the game will often spring nasty surprises on you that you simply couldn't have predicted. This, frustratingly, can make the decision-making process a game of utter guesswork. It's impossible to be 'correct'

"WHILE LARGELY UNCHANGED FROM THE FIRST GAME, COMBAT IS SOMEWHAT IMPROVED AND REBALANCED"

all the time, inevitably leading to the deaths of your people and frequent dips in morale. *The Banner Saga 2* isn't a happy game, then; it's knowingly rather morose.

This feeling of occasional cluelessness also carries over the battles to some degree. At the start of each encounter you have to pick the characters for your squad, but you'll do so without being given any real information on the battle at hand. More experienced players will pick the units that fit their tactics garnered from the first game, but for beginners it's a complete shot in the dark.

Once you're in battle, though, the bread-and-butter strategy is solid. While largely unchanged from the first game, combat is somewhat improved with better balanced attacks and powers, new items, new enemies, and an entire new race; the Horseborn's greater mobility offers new strategic potential. Some battles are also livened up with mission-based objectives,

escort missions, unique environmental obstacles and interactive elements, adding some much needed variety to the repetitive nature of the first game.

The Banner Saga 2 sticks closely to the formula of the original, with stunning art, an intricate story and a solid battle system. The plot can be tough to follow at times, while the battle system and its many nuances could be better explained in-game. Overall, then, Stoic has served up another competent strategy experience, but it doesn't appear to be stretching itself all that far.

VERDICT

BUILDS ON AN ALREADY BRILLIANT INDIE HIT

PlayMag_UK scored 8 for
The Banner Saga 2

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Versus Evil

DEVELOPER
Stoic

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1



■ DNA HUNTER

Alpha 14 / 20

While you can try and shoot other players to death, you're much better off using your pickaxe. The melee weapon lets you move faster, has a near-instant lock-on and, here's the kicker, basically kills any enemy in one hit.

"IF UMBRELLA CORPS HAS ONE GOOD IDEA, IT'S THE INCLUSION OF UNDEAD ON THE MULTIPLAYER MAPS"





Umbrella Corps

A living nightmare



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Capcom

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
£24.99

PLAYERS
1-6



The *Resident Evil* franchise may well have shambled its way back into the good graces of gamers with the sensational reveal of *Resident Evil VII: Biohazard*, but many are still haunted by the brand's decade long love affair with bullets and body counts; blind action over tempered thrills with *Resi 5*, *6* and *Operation Raccoon City*. Diehard fans are being catered to, finally, with *Biohazard* in 2017 though *Umbrella Corps* is the result of a company that wants to continue banking on action in the interim period. But make no mistake: *Umbrella Corps* is - in essence - the lingering, putrid smell that remains of the decaying corpse that is modern *Resi*.

And so we are left to consider, what is truly worse - that *Umbrella Corps* exists, a knowingly maligned release that Capcom wants you to part with your money to play? Or that the publisher believed a multiplayer third-person shooter - one dressed up as *Resident Evil* - would be anything more than a colossal disaster from the outset? Ultimately, it doesn't really matter which way you look at it, because *Umbrella Corps* fails at almost every conceivable level. It's a masterful example of how to mismanage a brand, of a laboured pre-production cycle and even worse execution.

As a tactical experience, where your bland, hulking avatar occupies so much of your field-of-vision that it's difficult to follow the action, it fails. As an action game, where the temptation to lock into cover as intended is tempered by tiny maps and poorly placed spawn points, it fails. As a *Resident Evil* spin-off, where a handful of vaguely recognisable locales and voiceovers seek to tie it into the wider canon, it once again fails. But it's as a shooter where *Umbrella Corps* ultimately collapses, where it's easier and more satisfying to kill an enemy with a melee strike than with a steady stream of bullets; the entire game is like this, a baffling array of basic ideas and deliberately obtuse executions.

If *Umbrella Corps* has one good idea, it's to be found in the inclusion of undead on the multiplayer maps. It's an interesting mechanic that often threatens to spice up otherwise drab encounters - though sadly it's wasted in a poor shooter. That's *Umbrella Corps* all over: mindless, drab, broken and ultimately frustrating.

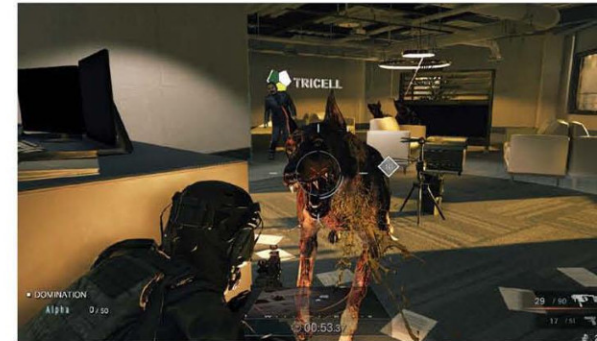
VERDICT

AT LEAST RESI CAN'T GET ANY WORSE



PlayMag_UK scored 3 for
Umbrella Corps

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



ΔOXI Should you get bored of the multiplayer maps (which is likely), or the poor progression systems (you will), then there's always a stripped-back single-player mode to try though it's perhaps more boring than anything else in the game.



Guilty Gear Xrd-Revelator-

Anything Ryu can do, Ky can do better



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
PQube

DEVELOPER
Arc System Works

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-64



If *Street Fighter V*'s modest spread of modes and options left early adopters feeling short-changed, *Revelator* can be seen as the polar opposite – a cel-shaded Santa Claus barrelling onto the scene after one too many sherries for his grasp of the Gregorian calendar system to hold up.

A feature-packed update to *-SIGN-*, there are new toys galore for everyone to play with here, from brand new characters and returning staples to enhanced tutorials and trials as well as a whole new slab of beautiful nonsense in its story mode. Whatever you want when you pick up a new fighter, you can pretty much rest assured that you'll be able to find it with little more than a spot of menu mining.

Just as Lab Zero did with the most recent *Skullgirls* releases, ArcSys has presented *Revelator* as not just a shiny new fighting game but a perfect gateway into the genre for anyone that still feels out of their depth when they pick up a stick or join a lobby. The tutorial here is excellent, employing practical applications of the many tech tools at your disposal and lessons in execution that will serve students well in far more than just this one game. Those who just want to jump straight into a ruck are just as well catered for, however, and it's not

nearly as brain-meltingly complex as it can first appear – behind the somewhat abstract button layout lies a fairly straightforward system of combos, specials, cancels and supers, one made even more accessible via the addition of the Stylish mode option that lets you mash your way to flashy combos at the cost of taking a little additional damage.

As if the roster wasn't diverse enough before, the new additions take this to the extreme. Jam's rushdown style and chargeable, chainable specials make her relatively simple to get a feel for while at the other end of the spectrum, Jack-O's complex system of building and manipulating bases that spawn ghosts makes the game feel almost more like an RTS than a fighter.

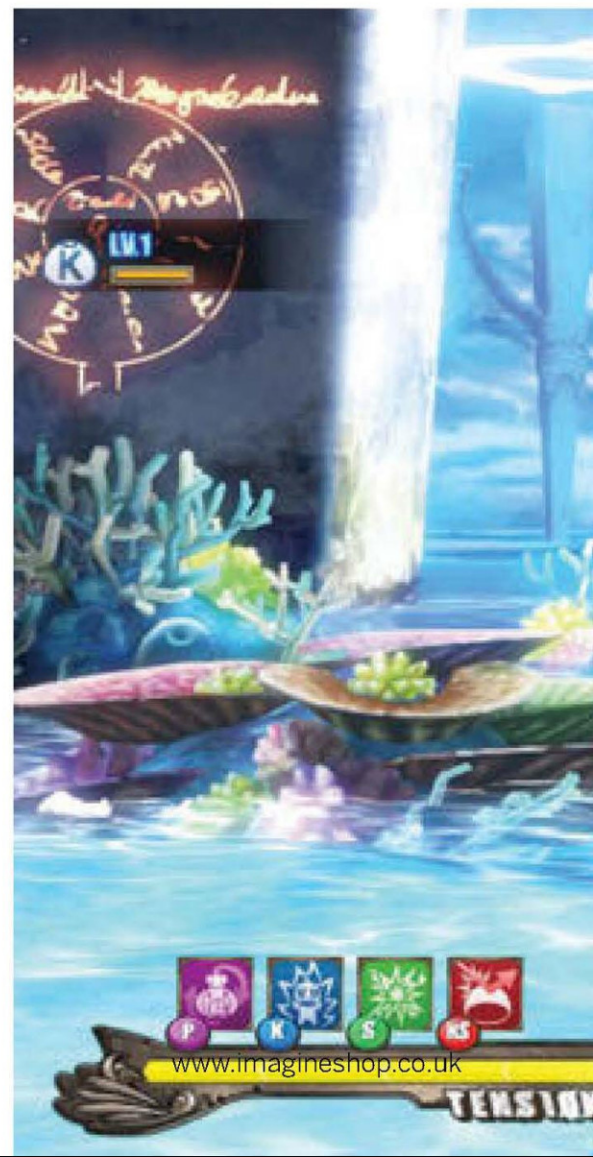
Despite stiff competition from *SFV*, *MKX* and a bunch of other great beat-'em-ups, *Revelator* makes a rock-solid case for consideration as the best fighter of this generation so far.

VERDICT

HEAVEN OR HELL? HEAVEN ALL THE WAY

PlayMag_UK scored **9** for
Guilty Gear Xrd -Revelator-

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



"MAKES A ROCK-SOLID CASE FOR CONSIDERATION AS THE BEST FIGHTER OF THE GENERATION"

ΔOXΔ Even a good two years after we first saw *-SIGN-*, the gorgeous 3D visuals masquerading as 2D art still constantly find new ways to floor us.



Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter

It's in the details



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bigben Interactive

DEVELOPER
Frogwares

PSN PRICE
£39.99

PLAYERS
1



It's so strange to witness a series of games continually improve but never really get any better. It's such a contradiction that should be

impossible, especially in an industry like this. The games have become better in individual areas with every new release, whether that's better graphics, more intricate puzzles or brand new features that – really, truly, honestly – offer something new for the puzzle adventure genre. And yet *still* it manages to fall short each time, always just one step away from a wider appeal.

Crimes And Punishments really helped the franchise stand out, offering a robust puzzler built in the world-famous universe of Holmes and Watson. *The Devil's Daughter* follows that same trend, improving the quality in a number of ways, but – true to form – it just doesn't quite make it far enough beyond that threshold into 'must-have'. In terms of the puzzling, this is easily the series' best. *The Devil's Daughter* builds upon its predecessor's intriguing elements, enhancing elements such as Sherlock's famous skills of observation and deduction. The former provides a more in-depth clue detection, building into an *L.A. Noire*-style evidence system that you'll be able to utilise in your questioning with the game's NPCs. This combines with extra abilities, from eavesdropping to visualising

crime scenes, to make for a much wider range of puzzles to solve.

Deduction, on the other hand, hasn't been improved as such, at least in terms of mechanics. It still utilises the same system found in *Crimes And Punishments* (now titled the 'Mind Palace', after Holmes' famous innate skill) but here it evolves the prior game's binary decision-making and really alters the story. It's now much easier to come across the incorrect answer, meaning that you'll need to mimic the investigator's art of deduction for yourself if you're to reach the right verdict. And even then, you're provided a moral decision, shifting from the 'absolving or condemning' of a criminal into more personal choices – such as an early one involving telling a child of his father's death or not. This moral choice plays more heavily on the outcome of the game's story too, a facet of the game that has been refined to provide a much more compelling tale.

As much as the graphics have improved there's still poor animation and voice acting, a disappointment when so much effort has been made to focus on telling a more involved story than before. In terms of atmosphere, though, this is the best yet. Rather than individual places or events to explore, environments are on a much grander scale with interiors and exteriors connected to one another, open for exploration.

And yet there are those *faults*. Ropy quality with animation and VA aside, it would be enough for *The Devil's Daughter's* enhanced mechanics and focus on story alone to improve the franchise, but sadly Frogwares felt the need to add in a number of rather unnecessary extras, a la Telltale. The multiple skill-based mini-games that are used to activate certain gameplay elements, the twin-stick balancing act needed to successfully eavesdrop, the addition of needless stealth and action sequences...

It's perhaps an attempt to really push the franchise into the mainstream, and that's a commendable goal. It's been gaining popularity but the team needs to understand where it can find its victories and focus on that. For now, the series will remain relegated to the more obscure scale for fans of this particular breed of puzzle adventure titles. All the same, this is by far the best so far and if you've ever considered giving one of the Sherlock Holmes games a go, there's been no better option to start with.

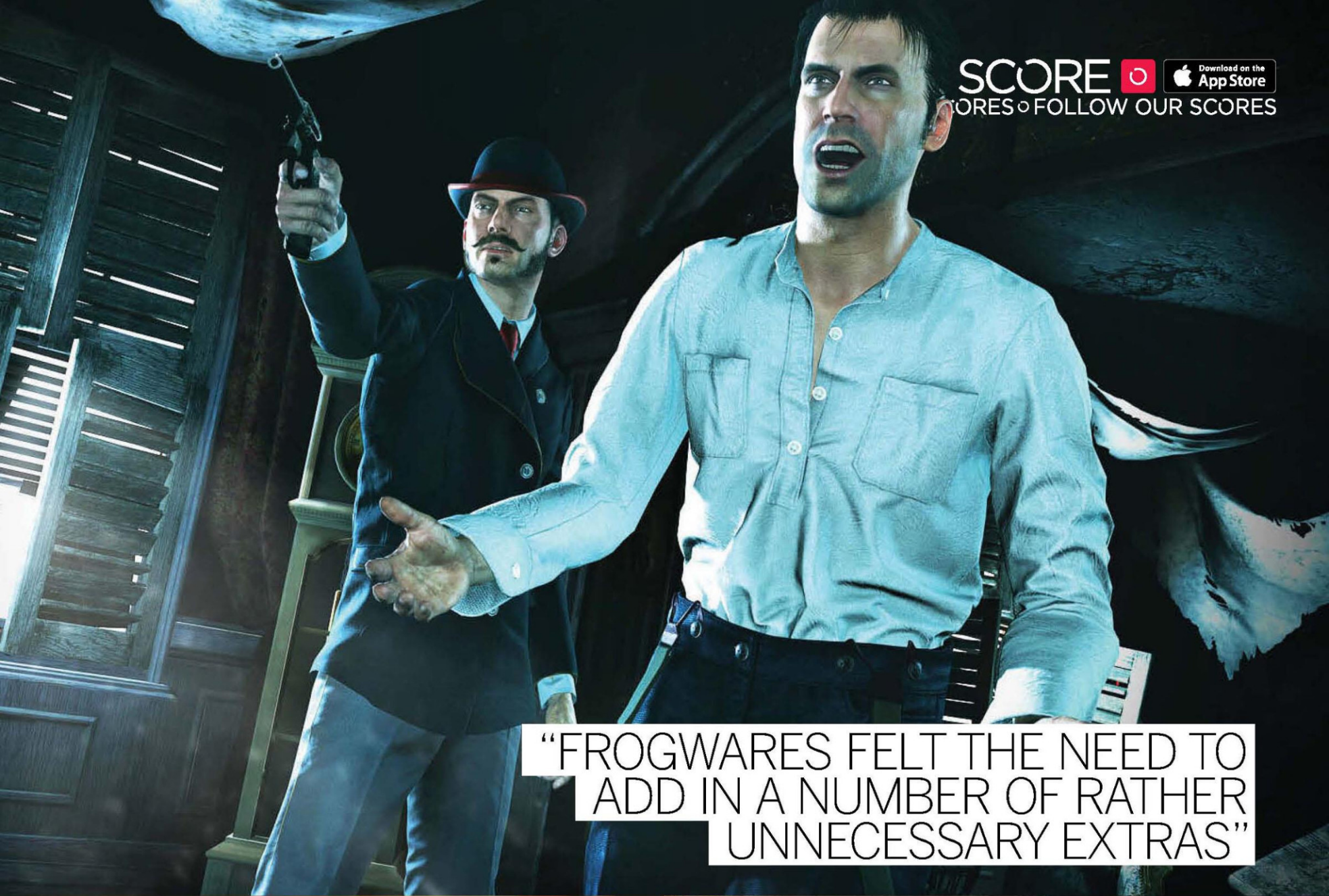
VERDICT

STILL FALLS JUST SHORT OF GREATNESS



PlayMag_UK scored 7 for
Sherlock Holmes:
The Devil's Daughter

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



"FROGWARES FELT THE NEED TO
ADD IN A NUMBER OF RATHER
UNNECESSARY EXTRAS"



AOX The overall story isn't a typical Sherlock Holmes adventure, but it's still an interesting one all the same.

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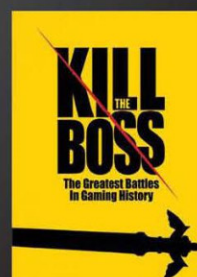
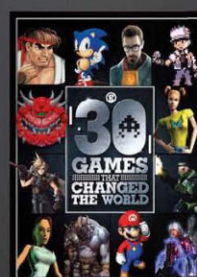
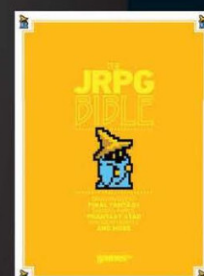
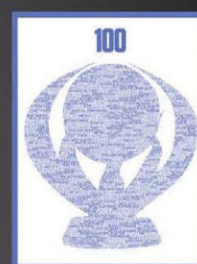
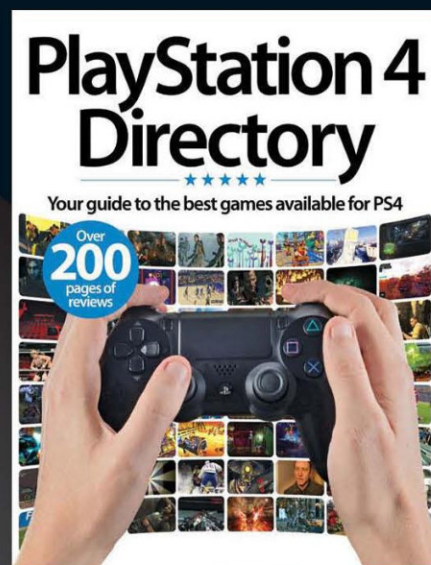
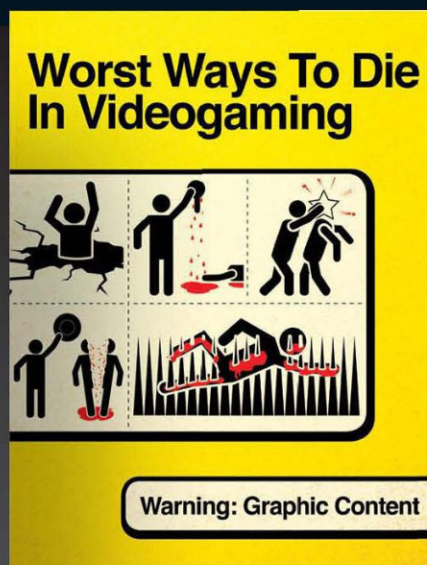


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FORMAT PS2

RELEASE DATE 22 OCTOBER 2001

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES

DEVELOPER DMA DESIGN

PLAY SCORE 98%

METACRITIC SCORE 97%

GRAND THEFT AUTO III



In 2001, a state of emergency was declared as one sprawling sandbox defied all belief and changed gaming forever

22 October was the day Rockstar unleashed its reinvention of the modern videogame, establishing the template that all open-world sandbox games would use in the decade that followed. *Grand Theft Auto III* wasn't just a staggering technical achievement, but one of the most important releases of the sixth-generation; a testament to DMA's vision of letting players loose in a world of virtualised crime and corruption.

We were handed the keys to a living metropolis, thrown into seedy Liberty City, and then were free to do as we pleased. *GTA III* was for the gamer who was sick of saving the princess from yet another castle; it was a reaction to the stale action genre and the bland shooters that presided over the early PlayStation 2 era. *GTA III* was for the sophisticated player who didn't mind getting their hands a little dirty from time to time.

And dirty you would have to get them. If you weren't there the first time round, it's probably difficult to imagine what the reaction to *GTA III* was even like. Gamers were astounded by

the freedom, the scope and depth; left wildly impressed by the sheer breadth of options thrust into their sweaty palms. Everybody else in the world was horrified, distraught that a "murder simulator" had been allowed to infect society and corrupt the youth. "Won't somebody please think of the children?" the news outlets, government officials, retailers and concerned citizens would cry, blissfully unaware that every generated controversy would only go on to establish *Grand Theft Auto III*'s infamy and sales, which now sit well over 17 million sold. If you were under 18 in 2001, there was no greater task – no mission more important – than convincing your parents to purchase *GTA III* on your behalf, lest you wanted to become the pariah of the playground.

"Well, sure, you can kill prostitutes," teenagers would be heard reasoning the world over, "but you don't have to." And it's true. *GTA III* might hand you a loaded gun, but it never forces you to pull the trigger. For the first time, we were lost in a bustling open-world city, rendered in gorgeous 3D.

BEST WEAPONS

The quickest ways to cause chaos, Liberty City style



ROCKET LAUNCHER

While ammo is often difficult to find, the rocket launcher is the best tool in the game for the ultimate amount of carnage. If you're battling against a big police presence, the rocket launcher is the key to survival – though you need to be wary of splash damage.



BASEBALL BAT

Who would have thought a piece of wood could cause so much harm? The baseball bat is one of the earliest weapons you find in Liberty City, but its uses are nearly endless. Work dents out of your car and defend yourself against the mob.



MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

It might take a little time to find them, but Molotov cocktails can cause widespread damage very quickly. Best used as a method for crowd control, but there's also a lot of satisfaction to be had in nailing passing vehicles from bridges and rooftops.

Pedestrians went on with their business, vehicles jostled for street space and everything seemed to move around you, not with you. All of this potential, and there we were stood on the hood of a car pumping round after round into anything that moved like a crazed lunatic, quoting lines from *Heat* and *The Sopranos* as we did it. Were we exorcising our demons? Perhaps, though it's far more likely that we were just taken aback by the open-ended game design.

On a technical level, *GTA III* was peerless back in 2001. The level of detail was phenomenal, the size of the open world staggering. The AI was sophisticated – for years it would find new ways to surprise and entertain – while the tight third-person camera gave us a new perspective on the action we had enjoyed since 1997 (with the release of the original top-down *GTA*). Not to mention, the controls and shooting mechanics were a genuine revolution. It was an excellently

“GAMERS WERE ASTOUNDED BY THE FREEDOM, THE SCOPE AND DEPTH; LEFT WILDLY IMPRESSED BY THE SHEER BREADTH OF POSSIBILITIES THRUST INTO THEIR SWEATY PALMS”

KEY FACTS

■ The reason the Shoreside Vale tunnel was always closed? It's not because Rockstar didn't finish it in time, but because the studio wanted to give the impression that the world continued well beyond the game's borders.

■ Following the September 11 tragedy, Rockstar did some emergency clean-up on *GTA III*, removing or changing some content due to concerns over how it would be perceived in the wake of the terrorist attacks.

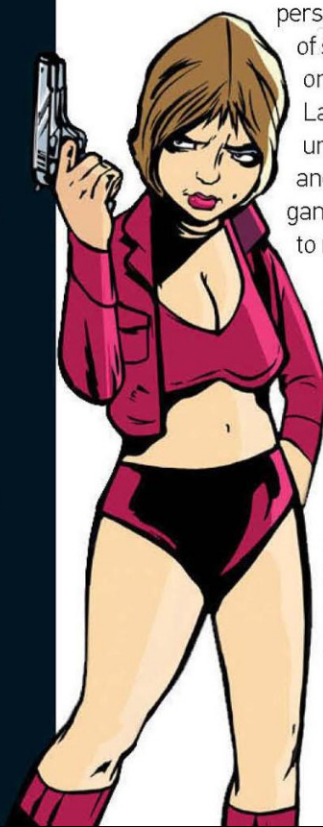


complementary system. But *GTA III* was always more than its systems and mechanics; perhaps that's why people gravitated towards it so passionately.

The mature story felt fresh and violently invigorating, a thinly-veiled ode to the collected works of Martin Scorsese. The soundtrack was diverse and the radio waves full of

personality, letting us drown out the sounds of sirens with the thunderous howls found on MSX FM or the inane chatter from Lazlow's Chatterbox FM. There were an unprecedented amount of side-missions and 'hidden packages' to discover, mini-games to enjoy and free-play opportunities to revel in.

There's a reason *GTA III* set the template for sandbox design in the years that followed, and not because it was absurdly successful – so is *FIFA* every year – but for its staggering innovation. The way in which we were able to interact with the world; the pace of that sprawling and cinematic story; the sheer breadth of options it gave you to cause chaos in a digital space. *GTA III* changed gaming in so great a way that is difficult to even fully comprehend.





EIGHT WAYS GTA III CHANGED THE GAME

Sandbox shooters and action games were never the same again – here's what DMA Design brought to the genre



WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

■ *Grand Theft Auto III* might not have been the first game to feature Liberty City – that honour goes to the original release back in 1997 – but its appearance here was unlike anything seen in gaming before. We had seen open worlds, but usually in the realms of fantasy. Never had we explored something so busy and bustling with life.



STONE-FACED KILLER

■ The idea of a silent protagonist certainly isn't new, but Rockstar did a fantastic job with its characterisation of Claude, the voiceless *Grand Theft Auto III* protagonist. With just cutscenes and radio interviews, Claude became one of the most successful GTA characters, letting players fill in the blanks to his role in this seedy slice of American injustice.



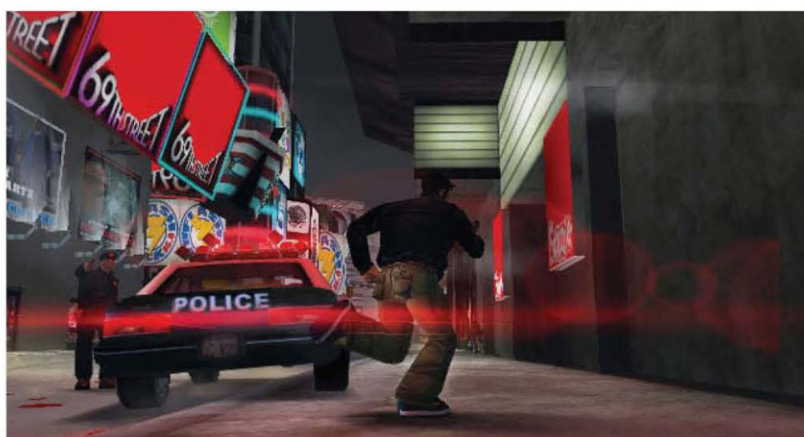
NEED FOR SPEED

■ At its heart, *Grand Theft Auto III* could often feel like the ultimate street racing game. Whilst its 2D forefathers would always feature chaotic driving, it was nothing compared to tearing through a full 3D city. The freedom to get in any car at any time and just drive was liberating, as was the knowledge that you could take down anybody in your way.



IN CONTROL

■ It might handle like hell nowadays but back in 2001, we hadn't seen such controls in a third-person action game. The shooting and movement mechanics were polished beyond belief; it could be played and enjoyed for hours on end. Rockstar would continue to refine its controls over the years, but their debut here in *GTA III* was special.



INNOVATIVE DESIGN

■ Because of the open-play possibilities, the main storyline in the early *GTA* games often gets overlooked, though it was pretty incredible. DMA Design packed *Grand Theft Auto III* with clever missions that really utilised the space: who could ever forget the Salvatore Leone rooftop assassination or the helicopter/rocket launcher showdown?



GUNS, GUNS, GUNS

■ The range of weaponry available to the player in *GTA III* was vast. There was a weapon for every occasion, be it a baseball bat for terrorising pedestrians or items such as Molotov cocktails and rocket launchers for those times you need to see off a five-star Wanted level. If you needed or wanted full destruction, *GTA* always had your back.



CINEMATIC FLAIR

■ Hot on the heels of the Rockstar-published *Max Payne*, *GTA III* fuelled the publisher's fascination with bringing cinematic flair to games. The way the story was framed around crime fiction was brilliant, as was the use of voice talent. Michael Rapaport, Joe Pantoliano, Michael Madsen and Robert Loggia all had parts in the game.



FREE TO ROAM

■ *Grand Theft Auto* never forces you to commit crimes whilst outside of its story missions, but it sure doesn't stop you either. There was a primal joy to be found in going off the rails in *GTA*, stocking up on weapons before seeing how long you could survive with the entire city (and the army) after you. *GTA III* was the first time we felt truly free in a videogame.

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INTERVIEW

MUSICAL SCALES

Stewart Copeland, former drummer with The Police, on composing Spyro



What does *Spyro The Dragon* mean to you?

When I was doing *Spyro*, it was during the 'Golden Age' of my family life. It was a time where my boys were old enough, and my girls were just young enough where we could all sit around the TV and play games. It was like a 1950s family, gathered around the one TV with only three stations to choose from.

My son Patrick, who works at Insomniac Games now, would take the controller and guide us through the levels. He was much better at the game than me by a long shot! *Spyro* was a real lucky strike, I think. The graphics were impressive, the gameplay was engaging and the best part for me was that I got to do it all while listening to my own damn music!

Would you consider yourself a gamer?

No, not really. I enjoyed *Spyro* with my family, but even now my son Patrick strenuously tries to engage me with games. He wants to play games in which he can not only kill his father, but also "teabag" him...

When you were starting work on *Spyro*, what did you get to see of the game itself?

I had the game in front of me and it was glorious. It took me a while to get through the levels because I was so crap at it. So because I could play it, I'd have the music I created on a loop while I played the levels. But sometimes I'd find myself forgetting about the music entirely while trying to finish the level! It was an early version of the game so it had glitches, of course. I could fly right out of the world and off into space, come around and view the level from behind. It ended up looking like a movie set.

I also had cheats to help me through the game such as invincibility, which was critical to actually helping me experience the game! By the way, all the careful work I did in matching certain tracks to particular levels went unused. I'm not sure if they were just unaware that I matched levels with tracks, or that they just made different creative choices, but the result seemed kind of random to me.

Each *Spyro* game contains a large number of tracks. How did you deal with creating such an extensive tracklist?

Something interesting came from working on *Spyro*, and other times where I had to create a large volume of material fast, such as when I composed for *Dead Like Me* and *The Equalizer*. For TV, the show comes in Tuesday and you have to finish the music and ship it by Friday, whether it's your finest hour or not. For *Spyro* it was kind of like doing a quadruple LP of backing tracks. A lot of material was required, and under that intense schedule the quality of work improved drastically. That's not what you'd expect and it sounds counter-intuitive, but the music I've done in a blazing hurry is the best music I've ever written. When I get commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony to write a concerto for their orchestra, I reach back to *Spyro* for some of those tunes I wrote in the heat of the moment. They're some of my most affecting music, my best insights and my best ideas.

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It's in these moments of pressure is when our creative juices start to flow. I arrived at my *Spyro* music very quickly. I'd write four tunes in a day and on the next day I'd tidy them up. And yet, under those conditions the actual depth of the music and the progressions, makes for some of my favourite music that I've ever written.

Compared to the first game, how much did the tech change for the PS2 games?

The gear is evolving all the time, and there are always emergences of technology that change everything, flourish for a while, then are gone. I'm not sure where exactly the technology changed between the first three *Spyro* games to *Enter The Dragonfly* in terms of music, but the game itself underwent a massive change in technology.

It was a different development team who worked on it too, so it never felt quite the same to me. Maybe that's why it was the last one I did.

When composing for games, do you bring across what you've learned from your other work?

I bring everything across. Whether you're writing a song for a band, scoring a scene in a movie or writing a theme for a level in a game, it's the band, the scene or the game that points your creativity in the right direction. But it's your life that expresses itself once you're pointed in the right direction. So for *Spyro*, everything from stadium rock, classical music to nursery rhymes I learned at school all went into creating the music for any given level.

How do you create tracks that players won't tire of?

Many tracks intentionally overlap, including the main *Spyro* theme. I would apply them in other levels with no problem, because I thought that cross pollination would be good, and a recognizable tune coming back during the game was all part of *Spyro's* world. Each track would be about three minutes, and if I wasn't sick of it after listening to it again and again, it would be

okay. Ultimately, you need to rely on your own instincts to know if it's crap or not. That goes for any art.

Do you think that era of *Spyro* can be ever be returned to?

Here's a good analogy. The band Genesis had a whole career and then Peter Gabriel, their lead singer, left. The band thought "Screw that!" and the drummer, Phil Collins, moved onto the mic and they had a whole new string of hits. Diehard Genesis fans regard the original line-up as the best version, much like how many *Spyro* fans feel about the first three or four games. Years later, they tried to get the original Genesis line-up back together for a big reunion tour. Peter Gabriel took some time to think about it and while he thought it over, they did some research. It turns out that no one wanted to go see the original line-up because the hits they remember were from the Phil Collins years. There's a whole generation of gamers for which the new *Spyro* is the real deal.

EXTENDED PLAY

FINAL FANTASY

With FFXV just around the corner and the VII remake looming large on the horizon, there's never been a better time to discover why Square's hit RPG franchise is such a big deal



SEQUELS

■ **WE DON'T MEAN** the numbered games here, rather the various direct sequels that have looked to delve deeper into the worlds of some of the more popular mainline entries. *FFX-2* was the first of these, sending players back to Spira with an all-female party line-up and some interesting new mechanics. More recently, *XIII* got two direct sequels in *XIII-2* and *Lightning Returns*, the former offering a novel and open structure that lets you hop around the timeline as you see fit while the latter does away with turn-based party combat in favour of a more action-heavy approach where only Lightning herself can be controlled.



REPLAY THE CLASSICS

■ **ALTHOUGH THE FIRST** few games in the series really don't hold up all that well today, both the SNES and the PlayStation eras are uniformly wonderful. More or less all of the older games have been re-released on a bunch of modern platforms, meaning you don't even need to dust off old consoles to enjoy these timeless greats. Vita is a wonderful companion to these games, particularly the PS1-era games – on its smaller screen, the early polygon visuals don't look nearly as dated as they do blown up on a huge HDTV, plus you get to take a classic RPG with you wherever you go.



SPIN-OFFS

■ **IF YOU WANT** to read around the franchise a little bit, there are plenty of standalone curios to try and they span pretty much every genre you can think of. The *Dissidia* games are arena fighters; *Theatrhythm* is a superb musical celebration of the series; there are chocobo-themed racers and dungeon-crawlers; *Tactics* offers grid-based strategy battles; mobile app *Portal* lets you play VIII's glorious mini-game *Triple Triad*. Whatever you want to play, chances are you'll be able to find it in a delicious *Final Fantasy* flavour – Square has been pretty creative with the series over the years!



GET PHYSICAL

■ **WE'LL BUY PRETTY** much anything with the *Final Fantasy* brand attached to it, even if it's a board game as awful as Monopoly. It's just a collectable to us – we'd have no interest in ruining friendships by trying to actually play the damn thing, but it'll certainly be nice to look at when it launches next year. It's not the first time the series has delved into tabletop territory, but the other options aren't nearly as easy to

come by these days. Most notable was a Japan-only physical version of the awesome *Triple Triad* card game – we'd love a complete set but since cards were sold blind in boosters, full sets are extremely rare and stupidly expensive when they do turn up. If you're looking for something a bit less interactive, there's loads of cool merch out there, in particular the Play Arts Kai line of wonderfully detailed figurines.



FINAL FANTASY XV: A REALM REBORN

■ **WHETHER YOU'RE NEW** to MMOs or a hardened veteran, this enhanced version of Square's second foray into the online RPG market comes highly recommended. It's hands down the finest example available on console, good enough to justify the monthly subscription fee and absolutely packed

with content that caters for everyone from beginning players looking to run story content alone to hardcore groups who want to shoot for rare gear in the crazy 24-player raids. With a steady flow of new content and a huge expansion in *Heavensward*, you'll certainly never find yourself wanting for stuff to do.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

SAINTS ROW:
GAT OUT OF HELL

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 46 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 7 🏆 35

■ **SINCE THE ENTIRE** thing can be done on Casual difficulty in 20 hours or so, this is exactly what we asked for last issue – a brainless and dead easy Platinum to make up for several months running with very few on offer. The only two things you really need to be mindful of are the missable Trophies 'Top Gunner' (hit a Spire missile with the Blast power while hovering) and 'Terminal Hog' (capture the last control point of an Extraction Facility while on a motorbike), since Spires and Facilities are finite and will not return once destroyed, although you can still jump into co-op to get these should you mess up. Other than that, simply rinse the story, finish all the side missions and complete challenges and you're basically done.



CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN BLOOD

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 48 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 8 🏆 36

■ **ONLINE TROPHIES PRETTY** much always suck, but in a B-tier shooter like this, they're just the worst. If you're gunning for the Plat here, get the multiplayer stuff done ASAP as even though it was free on Plus and more people have it now, the majority of players are likely to move on as soon as something else comes along. When you come to do the solo stuff, take a good look through the list to check on the situational Trophies for each mission and try to get them done, ideally on your first run of the game as you'll likely to be playing on an easier setting. You will eventually have to get it done of Very Hard for a Gold Trophy, and that can be a bit of a nightmare – you need to play extremely cautiously, although difficulty Trophies *do* stack.





FAT PRINCESS

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 21 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 21

■ **IT TAKES A** special kind of person to want to rinse a middling online-heavy game for hours with nothing but Bronze Trophies up for grabs but hey, each to their own. It's only worth going for if you find that you actually like the game, since you'll need to play it a hell of a lot if you want to bag all the Trophies. There are only two offline Trophies, one for finishing the 'story' and one for doing all

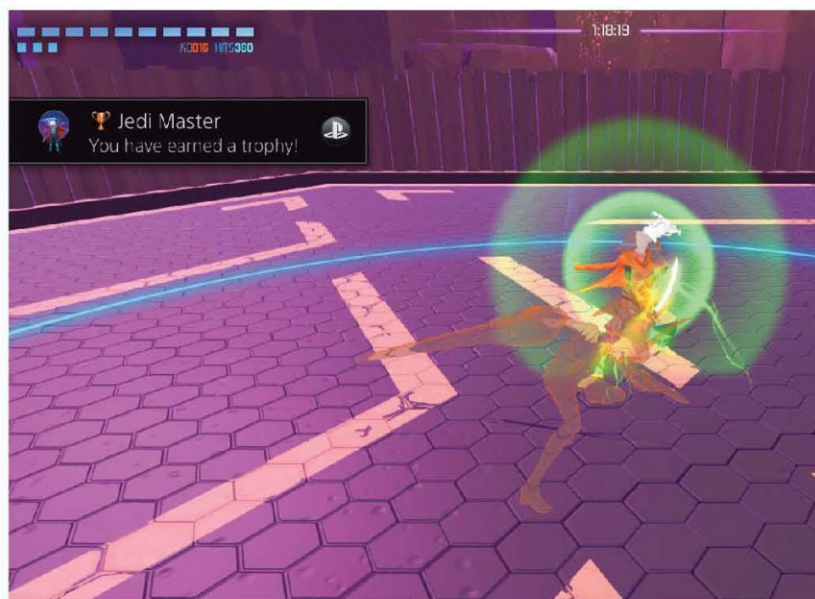
"YOUR BEST BET IS TO GROUP UP WITH TROPHY HUNTERS AND BOOST THE ONLINE TROPHIES"

the arena missions, which can be surprisingly tough. That said, they're good practise for multiplayer, so it might be an idea to try and get these done first. In terms of online, your best bet is to find a group of other Trophy hunters online and boost for the remaining Trophies – it's a damn sight quicker than doing it all legit.

ORESHIKA: TAINTED BLOODLINES

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 48 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 6 🏆 38

■ **THE TROPHIES HERE** aren't so much difficult as time-consuming – many simply require a bunch of grinding but since pretty much all of them can be earned in the post-game content, you needn't worry too much about going out of your way during your normal playthrough and if anything, it's actually going to be easier to worry about some of the trickier ones later in the game. There's also a fair amount of luck involved, with several situational Trophies that rely on having certain events play out before you can do as you're asked – performing ten exorcisms, for instance, isn't going to be easy if the game decides not to give you any ghosts to take care of. Patience is key here.



FURI

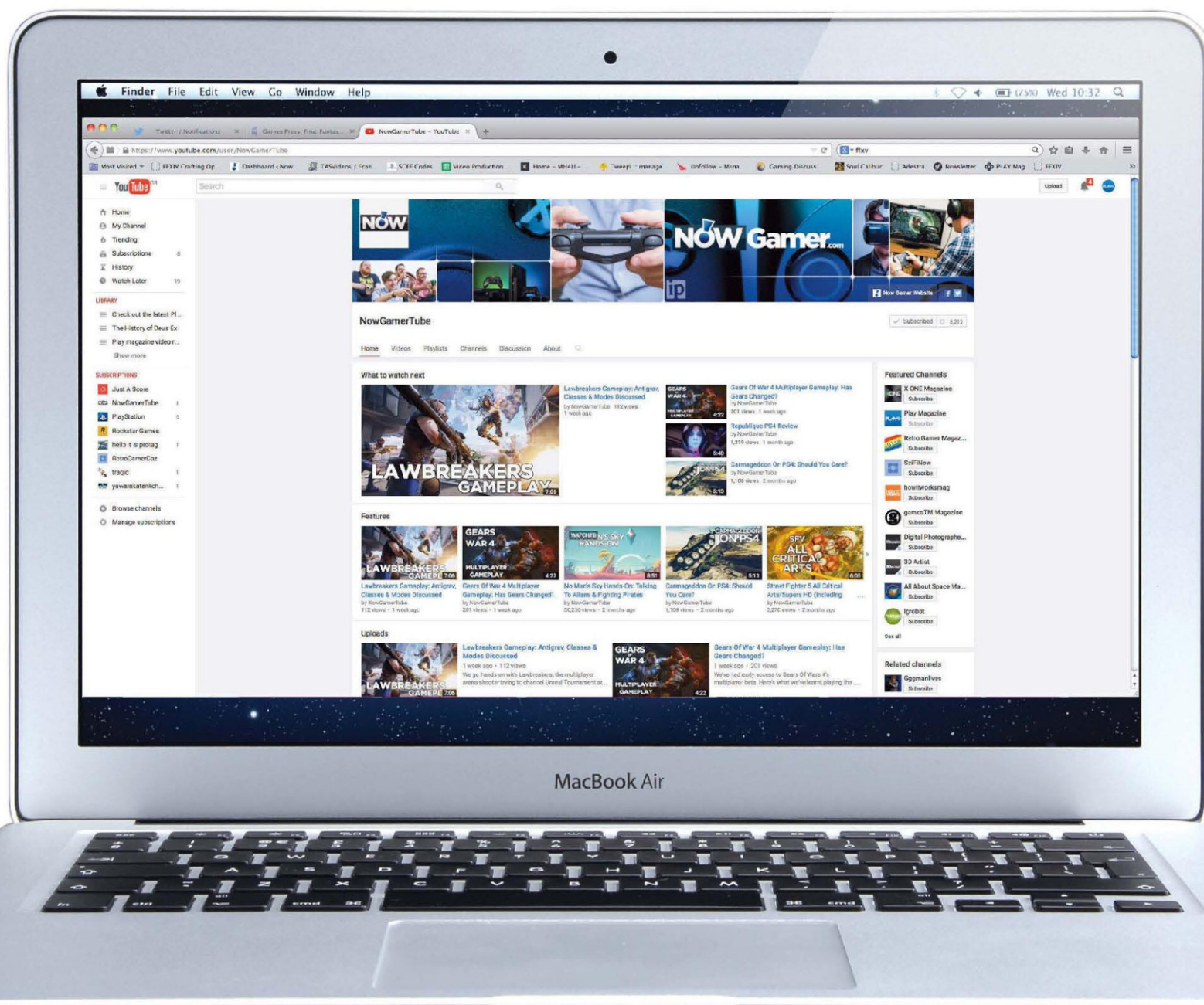
PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5
TROPHIES: 34 🏆 1 🏆 5 🏆 8 🏆 20

■ **WE'LL WARN YOU** right now – *Furi* is far from an easy Plat. With Trophies for finishing the ridiculously tough Furi difficulty with an S-Rank (learn every fight in Practice mode and quit to dashboard and restart if you mess one up in the run to avoid hurting your stats), beating a boss with no damage (we recommend The Edge on Furi difficulty – it can be done in less than two minutes once you know each phase, which will also net you 'Speedrunner') and getting all three endings (reload your save to get both at the end, and hang around with The Song after defeating her for the third, although this will mean starting over), only expert fighters need apply.

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RESIDENT EVIL 7: BIOHAZARD



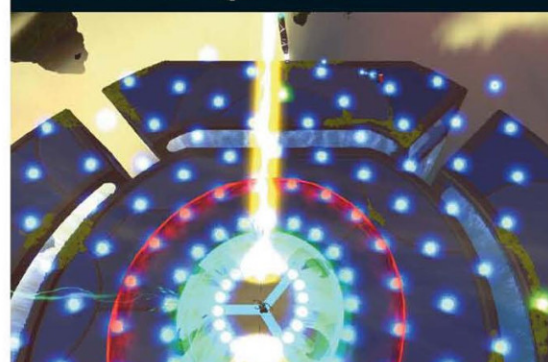
CAPCOM'S BOLD MOVE into first-person horror looks great, but have we even seen everything the demo has to offer yet?

THE BEST OF E3



NOW THAT THE dust has been given a chance to settle and we've all calmed down a bit, we check out the games that *really* stole the show.

FURI CONQUERED



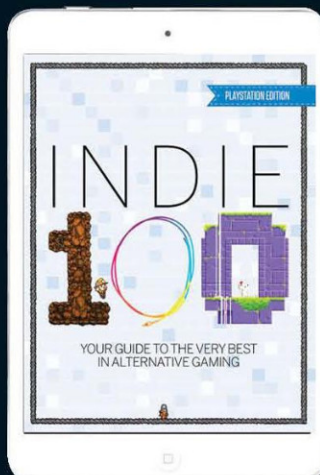
THIS JULY PLUS freebie is an action fan's dream. Come watch us tear apart the bosses and smash our way through Furi mode!

SHARING



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WIN!

YOUR BEST SCREENS



ΔOXΔ Our love for the awesome monsters that the *Star Wars* universe has given us won over this month – cheers to Hooper-316 for finding a dead Rancor!



ΔOXΔ *Street Fighter V* is packed with cool moments to grab, such as Xlr8destroyer's pic of Guile wrecking Ryu's face.

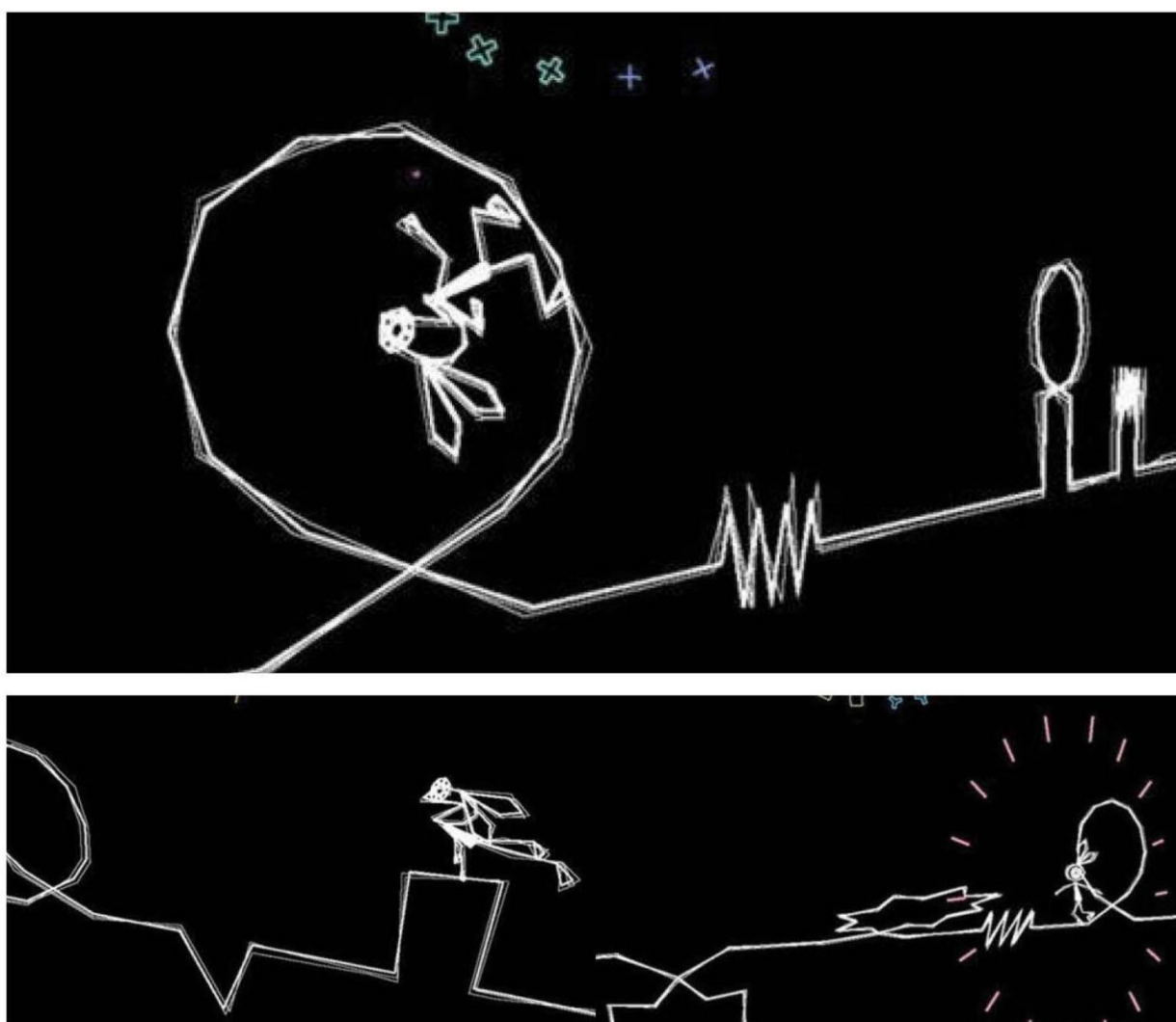


ΔOXΔ No wonder *For Honor* is taking so long – ThePurePain02 spotted it being made in *The Division*'s plagued world!

YOU HAVEN'T
PLAYED...?

VIB RIBBON

This classic PlayStation rhythm-action game is beloved by pretty much everyone who has had the joy of playing it. Here's why you should grab the PSN version yourself and join in the fun...



■ **THE ORIGINAL PLAYSTATION** was at the spearhead of the movement for graphical improvement as games leapt from 2D to glorious full 3D. Strange, then, that late in the console's life, one of its finest games would turn out to be a black-and-white line drawing of a music game – something almost at odds with everything the platform seemed to stand for. Coming from Japanese studio NanaOn-Sha, the same team that gave us the colourful rhyme-spitting antics of *PaRappa The Rapper*, *Vib Ribbon* is an extremely simple game in concept. All you need to do is press the right button at the right time and you'll avoid the corresponding obstacle in time with the music. Pretty straightforward, right? Wrong.

You see, those obstacles can be combined, spikes added to blocks or loops requiring double button presses and so on. All the while, both the camera and the course are able to move and spin, often making it tricky to accurately read what you need to do next. The on-disc soundtrack is a wonderfully eclectic bunch of noisy nonsense with no respect for musical conventions, but with the ability to insert any music CD and create levels based on your own tracks (a feature which, amazingly, still works in the PS3 version of the game), it becomes effectively infinite – even if you don't have CDs any more, you can always just pop into a charity shop and basically bag yourself some 50p physical DLC. One of the most inventive music games ever.

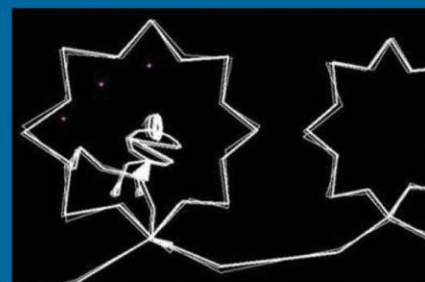
MEET VIBRI

The many forms of gaming's best dancing rabbit



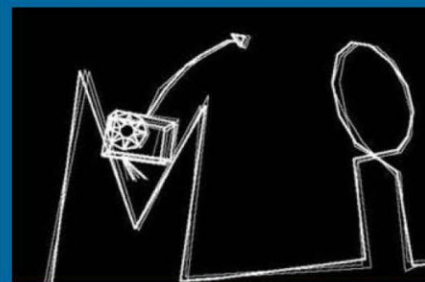
BUNNY QUEEN

Play well enough and Vibri will evolve into this regal form – proof of skill and an extra cushion against mistakes.



FROG FRACTIONS

Miss too many notes, though, and poor Vibri will go all wobbly, eventually turning into this derpy little frog thing.



DO THE WORM

Let Vibri down too much and she'll revert to this humiliating worm form, signifying that failure is imminent.

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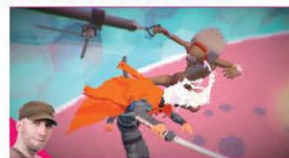
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LET'S PLAY... PS4 PLUS GAMES



LUKE ALBIGÉS FURI

Given that I love hardcore action games like *Bayonetta* and *Devil May Cry*, this was always going to be right up my street. Combat is tight and the music is *too good* – time to work on my speedrun strats.



LIAM WARR ROCKET LEAGUE

Some people renew their Plus subscriptions to get all the cool new games every month. I renew mine so I can keep playing *Rocket League*, and so I can carry on crushing fools online. 'gg ez' and so on.



DREW SLEEP HELLDIVERS

Shouting at opponents online is fun and all, but shouting at allies can be even more entertaining. It's such a great feeling when it all comes together, and if it doesn't? Hey, I get to go full toxic...



PAUL WALKER-EMIG GONE HOME

Both indie games and walking simulators get a lot of hate, but I'll always defend both – this is a perfect example of the relatively new genre and I was glad to see it on Plus to give it great exposure to new players.

PS4



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Alekhine's Gun	270	3
Alien: Isolation	249	9
Alienation	270	8
Amplitude	266	8
Arslan: The Warriors Of Legend	268	5
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	257	7
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: India	266	7
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	8
Assassin's Creed Syndicate	264	4
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	6
Axiom Verge	256	9
Batman: Arkham Knight	258	9
Battleborn	271	6
Battlefield 4	238	8
Battlefield Hardline	256	7
Blazblue Chronophantasma Extend	264	9
Bloodborne	256	9
Bloodborne: The Old Hunters	265	9
Bound By Flame	245	6
Broforce	268	6
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops III	264	8
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	7
Child Of Light	244	7
CounterSpy	248	5
DariusBurst: Chronicle Saviours	266	8
Dark Souls III	269	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	269	8
Daylight	245	2
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	7
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	7
Destiny	249	9
Destiny: House Of Wolves	258	8
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	7
Destiny: The Taken King	262	9
Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition	258	8
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	9
Dirt Rally	269	9
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	8
Divinity: Original Sin Enhanced Edition	264	8
Don't Starve	240	8
Doom	271	8
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	8
Dragon Ball Xenoverse	255	5
Dragon Quest Heroes	263	8
Driveclub	250	8
Dying Light	254	9
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	8
EA Sports UFC	246	7
EA Sports UFC 2	269	8
Enter The Gungeon	269	8
Ether One	258	8
Everybody's Gone To The Rapture	261	8
Evolve	254	6
F1 2015	260	8
Fallout 4	264	9
Far Cry 4	251	8
Far Cry Primal	268	8
Fez	243	10
FIFA 15	249	8
FIFA 16	262	9
Final Fantasy Type-0	255	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	9
Firewatch	267	6
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	8
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	9
God Of War III Remastered	260	8
Grand Theft Auto V	251	10
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	8
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	9
Guitar Hero Live	264	8
Hardware: Rivals	266	5
Hitman	268	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Hohokum	248	8
Homefront: The Revolution	271	6
Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number	255	9
inFamous: First Light	249	5
inFamous: Second Son	242	8
Invisible, Inc.	270	9
Just Cause 3	265	7
JStars Victory VS+	260	6
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	8
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	8
King's Quest: A Knight To Remember	261	8
Knack	238	6
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	5
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	6
Lego Dimensions	263	7
Lego Marvel's Avengers	267	6
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	8
Lego Jurassic World	258	7
Lego The Hobbit	244	6
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	9
Lords Of The Fallen	251	7
Lumo	271	7
Madden 16	262	8
Mad Max	262	4
Mercenary Kings	244	8
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	8
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain	261	9
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	8
Mortal Kombat X	257	9
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	4
N++	261	8
Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm 4	267	8
NBA 2K15	250	8
Need For Speed	264	5
Need For Speed Rivals	238	8
NHL 15	249	6
Not A Hero	267	6
Nuclear Throne	266	8
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	6
Outlast	241	7
Overwatch	271	8
Oxenfree	271	6
PES 2015	250	9
PES 2016	262	9
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	7
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare 2	268	8
Project Cars	258	6
Rainbow Six Siege	265	8
Ratchet & Clank	269	8
République	268	7
Resident Evil HD	253	8
Resident Evil Revelations 2	256	7
Resogun	238	9
Resogun Heroes	247	9
Rock Band 4	263	7
Rocket League	260	8
Rogue Legacy	248	9
Rory McIlroy PGA Tour	260	5
Salt And Sanctuary	269	8
Sébastien Loeb Rally Evo	267	5
Severed	270	8
Sheltered	270	9
Shovel Knight	258	9
Skylanders Superchargers	263	7
Skylanders Swap Force	238	7
Skylanders Trap Team	250	7
SOMA	262	8
Star Wars Battlefront	265	6
Street Fighter V	267	9
Strider	242	6
Super Time Force Ultra	262	9
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	8
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	7
Tearaway Unfolded	262	7
Teslagrad	253	7
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	2
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	9
The Crew	252	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Evil Within	250	8
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	10
The Order: 1886	254	8
The Vanishing Of Ethan Carter	260	8
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	257	10
The Witness	267	10
Thief	241	7
This War Of Mine: The Little Ones	267	7
Tiny Brains	240	6
Titan Souls	257	7
Tom Clancy's The Division	268	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5	263	3
TrackMania Turbo	269	8
Transistor	245	9
Transformers: Devastation	263	8
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	3
Trials Fusion	244	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	258	8
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End	270	10
Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection	263	8
Unravel	267	7
Until Dawn	261	8
Valiant Hearts	247	6
War Thunder	239	8
Wasteland 2: Director's Cut	264	8
Watch Dogs	245	8
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	6
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	8
Wolfenstein: The Old Blood	258	8
WWE 2K15	252	4
WWE 2K16	264	5

PS3



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
007 Legends	225	4
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	6
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	8
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	7
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	7
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	5
Afro Samurai	177	6
After Burner Climax	193	9
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	7
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	4
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	5
Age Of Booty	172	8
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	5
Alice: Madness Returns	207	6
Alien Breed: Impact	196	8
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	8
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	6
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	4
Aliens Vs Predator	189	7
All Zombies Must Die!	214	6
Alone In The Dark	173	7
Alpha Protocol	193	8
Amy	215	1
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	7
Ape Escape	208	5
Aquapazza: Aquaplay Dream Match	239	7
Aqua Panic	193	6
Arcana Heart 3	207	7
Armageddon Riders	207	6
Armored Core: For Answer	173	6
Armored Core 4	153	6
Armored Core V	217	6
Army Of Two	164	8
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	6
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	4
Assassin's Creed	161	5
Assassin's Creed II	186	9
Assassin's Creed III	225	7
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	9
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	7
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	7
Asura's Wrath	216	7

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Doom	8
Overwatch	8
Lumo	7
Battleborn	6
Homefront: The Revolution	6
Oxenfree	6

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GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	6
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	7
The Baconing	210	7
Band Hero	187	6
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	8
Batman: Arkham City	211	9
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	8
Battle Fantasia	176	7
Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	8
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
Battlefield 3	212	8
Battleship	219	4
Bayonetta*	187	9
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	9
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	7
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	8
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	216	7
Bionic Commando	179	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	6
BioShock	172	9
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	230	9
BlackSite	163	4
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	5
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	151	5
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	6
Blitz: The League II	172	6
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	6
Blur	193	8
Bodycount	210	5
Bombberman Ultra	185	8
Borderlands	185	8
Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	6
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	7
Braid	188	9
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	8
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brütal Legend	185	7
Bulletstorm	203	8
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	5
Burnout Crash	211	7
Burnout Paradise	162	8
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	8
Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
Calling All Cars	155	8
Call Of Duty 3	151	5
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	6
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	9
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	8
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	3
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	200	9
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	9
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Carnival Island	213	5
Catan	195	8
Cars 2	208	6
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	215	6
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	8
Civilization Revolution	168	9
Clash Of The Titans	193	6
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
The Club	163	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	9
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	8
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	6
Commander's Challenge	185	6
Command & Conquer	175	4
Conan	160	7
Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	199	7
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	9
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	3
Create	199	7
Critter Crunch	188	9
Cross Edge	182	5
Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	204	7
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubixx HD	207	7
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	181	3
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dante's Inferno	189	8
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	215	7
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	211	9
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	8
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	188	8
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	202	8
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	223	7
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	231	6
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	6
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	201	9
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	203	8
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	6
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	195	8
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	199	7
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	193	9
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	227	7
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	163	9
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	235	9
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	219	7
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	224	9
Disney Infinity	235	8
DJ Hero	186	9
DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	3
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
Double Dragon Neon	224	4
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
Dragon Age: Origins	186	8
Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	4
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	235	8
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	209	7
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	233	5
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	4
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	7
EA Sports Active 2	200	8
EA Sports MMA	198	8
Eat Lead	178	3
echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	202	8
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	9
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	170	4
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	152	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	8
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	176	8
Euforia	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	158	8
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explodemon	203	7
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	185	8
F1 2012	223	7
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	170	5
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	173	10
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	172	7
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	8
Fat Princess	183	6
FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	8
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	236	9
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	9
The Fight	199	4
Fight Night Champion	203	8
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	181	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	190	8
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	8
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	5
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	179	7
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	198	5
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battlegrounds	151	6
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	220	3
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	3
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	6
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
GI Joe	183	2
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	178	4
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	230	9
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	7
The Golden Compass	162	3
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	6
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 5	200	8
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	9
Grand Theft Auto V	236	10

*denotes import review

THE WORST... MOVIE TIE-INS



1 Street Fighter: The Movie



2 Terminator 3: ROTM



3 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon



4 Space Jam



5 X-Men: The Official Game



6 Fight Club



7 Catwoman



8 The Da Vinci Code



9 Star Wars: The Phantom Menace



10 From Russia With Love

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



PLATINUM TROPHIES PLAY: ANY LEGO GAME

There's often a fair degree of grinding involved in getting a Lego Plat but the games are so easy that you can pretty much turn your brain off while you do it. The perfect way to chill after a tense online game.



RADIOACTIVE CHAIRS PLAY: NUCLEAR THRONE

Disclaimer: you may also need to like super-hard twin-stick shooters and/or roguelikes to achieve maximum enjoyment. And fish that can roll. And blind chickens with swords. Yeah, it's all kinds of silly.



SAVING THE LAST HUMANS PLAY: RESOGUN

It's crazy to think that one of the best shooters on PS4 has been with us since launch day. We still love to fire this up from time to time and go nuts – those voxels are just so darn beautiful.



MMOS PLAY: FINAL FANTASY XIV

Easily the best massively multiplayer RPG on console and one of the best on the market overall, Square's online epic is approaching its third birthday and the game has frankly never been better.



TALKING SWORDS PLAY: TRANSISTOR

Amazingly, that's not even the best thing about the game, either – the way the different powers can be used and combined in cool ways is an awesome mechanic. It also has a button that makes Red sing.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Greed Corp	191	7
Grid 2	232	7
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	174	7
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	7
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	184	8
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	7
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	6
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	9
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	181	8
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	6
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	167	6
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	189	9
Heavy Weapon	187	7
Heroes Over Europe	184	4
Hitman: Absolution	225	9
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	7
Homefront	203	6
The House Of The Dead 4	218	8
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	5
Hustle Kings	190	8
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	2
I Am Alive	217	6
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	9
The Incredible Hulk	168	5
inFamous	180	8
inFamous 2	207	8
Inferno Pool	181	8
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	8
Inversion	220	4
Iron Man	166	5
Iron Man 2	193	5
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	8
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	5
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	6
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	6
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	8
Journey	216	9
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	7
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	6
Just Cause 2	190	8
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	7
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	7
Katamari Forever	184	8
Kick-Ass The Game	194	6
Killer Is Dead	235	7
Killzone 2	176	9
Killzone 3	202	8
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	8
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	9
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	7
The King Of Fighters XII	182	7
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	8
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	2
Kung Fu Rider	196	6
Lair	158	5
LA Noire	206	9
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	9
The Last Guy	171	9
Last Rebellion	191	4
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	5
Legendary	173	6
Lego Batman	173	6
Lego Batman 2	221	8
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	7
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	6
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	7
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	7
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	187	8
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	7
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	8
Lego The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	2
Limbo	209	9
LittleBigPlanet	172	9
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	10
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	8
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
London 2012	221	4
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	6
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	4
Lost Planet 2	192	8
Lost Planet 3	236	5
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	209	8
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	188	5
Mafia II	196	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	7
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	8
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	6
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	201	10
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	198	8
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	7
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	192	8
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	9
<i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.</i>		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	9
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	5
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	8
Mindjack	202	3
Minecraft	240	9
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	173	7
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	192	8
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	205	8
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	233	7
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	151	9
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	9
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	4
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	5
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	195	6
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	224	8
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	6
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	9
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	9
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	8
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	213	6
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	215	3
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	8
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	223	7
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	8
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	6
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	177	8
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	155	8
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	6
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	7
The Orange Box	161	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Outland	207	7
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	181	6
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	183	6
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	235	8
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	9
PES 2012	210	7
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	169	6
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	9
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	160	7
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	232	5
Portal 2	205	10
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	6
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	8
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	181	7
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	216	7
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	236	7
Pure	171	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	6
Quantum Of Solace	175	5
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	167	8
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	8
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	8
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	8
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	7
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	235	8
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	193	9
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	8
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	211	7
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	7
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	7
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	177	8
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	8
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	210	9
Resonance Of Fate	191	8
Retro City Rampage	228	7
Ridge Racer 7	151	7
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	6
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	8
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	5
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	5
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	2
Risk: Nations	202	8
Rock Band Blitz	223	8
Rock Band	169	9
Rock Band 2	179	9
Rock Band 3	199	9
Rocksmith	223	7
Rogue Warrior	188	1
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	4
Rune Factory Oceans	220	5
RUSE	197	8
The Saboteur	187	6
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	7
Sacred 3	247	6
Saints Row 2	172	7
Saints Row: The Third	211	8
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	6
SBK Generations	220	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse	194	9
Savage Moon	175	8
Saw	186	5
SBK Generations	220	5
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	9
Section 8: Prejudice	209	8
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	8
Sega Rally	158	9
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	7
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	7
Shadows Of The Damned	207	8
Shank	197	8
Shatter	183	9
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	7
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	7
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	3
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	6
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	8
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	7
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	6
The Simpsons Game	160	8
The Sims 3	199	8
The Sims 3: Pets	212	7
SingStar	159	8
Singularity	195	8
Siren Blood Curse	170	6
Skate	159	8
Skate 2	175	8
Skate 3	192	8
Skullgirls	218	8
Sleeping Dogs	222	8
The Sly Collection	200	8
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	6
Sniper Elite V2	218	5
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	4
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	5
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	6
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	8
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	4
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	7
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	9
Sonic Generations	212	7
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	5
Sonic Unleashed	175	4
Sorcery	219	7
SoulCalibur IV	169	9
SoulCalibur V	214	8
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	8
Spec Ops: The Line	220	7
Spider-Man 3	155	3
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	3
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	6
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	5
Spin Jam	174	3
Splatterhouse	200	5
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	7
Split/Second: Velocity	192	9
Sports Champions	196	8
Sports Champions 2	225	6
SSX	216	4
Stacking	203	8
Starhawk	219	8
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	6
Star Trek	231	5
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	5
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	6
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	6
Star Wars: Pinball	230	7
Start The Party!	196	7
Stormrise	178	5
Stranglehold	159	6
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	9
Street Fighter IV	176	9
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	8
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	7
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	9
Stuntman: Ignition	157	8
Super Stardust HD	155	7
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	5
Superstars V8 Racing	181	6
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	7
Super Street Fighter IV	191	9
Supremacy MMA	211	4
Syndicate	216	7
Tales Of Graces f	222	7
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tales Of Xillia	234	7
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	7
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	8
Tekken 6	184	9
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	9
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	6
Tetris	202	8
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	6
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	6
The Last Of Us	233	10
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	5
The Walking Dead	231	9
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	2
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	6
Time Crisis 4	166	7
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	5
TimeShift	162	7
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	5
TNA Impact!	171	7
Tokyo Jungle	223	8
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	8
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	7
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	7
Tomb Raider	229	9
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	8
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	8
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	7
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	7
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	5
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	4
Top Spin 3	168	7
Top Spin 4	203	6
Toy Story 3	195	8
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	6
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	7
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	8
Trash Panic	181	7
Trine	184	8
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	5
Trinity Universe	194	6
Tron Evolution	200	1
Tumble	198	7
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	4
Turok	163	4
Twisted Metal	216	6
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	9
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	8
UFC Undisputed 3	215	8
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	9
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	8
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	10
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	9
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	1
The Unfinished Swan	225	7
Unreal Tournament III	162	8
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	5
Valkyria Chronicles	173	8
Vanquish	197	9
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	7
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	9
Virtua Tennis 3	150	9
Virtua Tennis 4	205	7
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	8
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	8
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	6
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	5
Warhawk	157	8
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	1
Warriors Orochi 3	217	5
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	5
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	2
Wet	184	4
Wheelman	178	7
Where The Wild Things Are	188	5
White Knight Chronicles	190	5
White Knight Chronicles II	207	4
WipEout HD	172	8
Wolfenstein	183	7
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	8
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	8
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	7
WWE All Stars	204	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	5
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	9
X-Men Destiny	211	3
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	7
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	3
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	6
Yakuza 3	191	8
Yakuza 4	203	8
Yakuza 5*	264	9
Zen Pinball 2	224	9
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	8

VITA



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	7
Army Corps Of Hell	217	6
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	7
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	3
Everybody's Golf	215	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	8
Broken Age	257	5
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	2
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	8
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	9
Dead Nation	201	8
Destiny Of Spirits	244	7
Dokuro	230	7
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	8
Escape Plan	216	8
FIFA Football	216	8
fiOw	151	9
Flower	176	8
Gravity Crash	187	8
Gravity Rush	219	9
Hotline Miami	233	9
Hustle Kings	216	8
Joe Danger	194	9
Killzone: Mercenary	236	9
LittleBigPlanet	223	9
Little Deviants	215	6
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	8
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	221	7
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	5
Mortal Kombat	219	8
MotorStorm RC	217	8
Muramasa Rebirth	234	8
New Little King's Story	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	6
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	8
Orgarhythm	230	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
Persona 4 Golden	228	9
PixelJunk Monsters	163	9
Puddle	222	8
Rayman Origins	216	8
Reality Fighters	215	5
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	5
Ridge Racer	216	4
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	8
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	3
Sorcery Saga: Curse Of The Great Curry God	240	7
Soul Sacrifice	232	9
Sound Shapes	223	8
Superbeat Xonic	265	7
Superfrog HD	234	4
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	7
Sumion: Demon Arts	230	4
Super Stardust Delta	216	8
Tearaway	239	8
Terraria	232	8
Touch My Katamari	216	8
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	8
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	8
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	8
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	8
Unit 13	216	6
Velocity Ultra	233	8
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	8
Virtue's Last Reward	227	8
WipEout 2048	215	9

*denotes import review

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

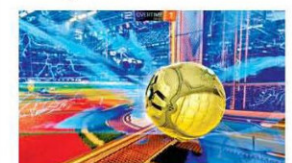
Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Hatsune Miku Future Tone
WHY (was it chosen?)
There's just so much content

LUKE ALBIGES

YEAH, I'M STILL plugging away at this new rhythm-action beauty after picking up the Japanese import version thanks to my utter lack of willpower. We're already a game behind over here and even when *Project Diva X* does arrive, it'll be way lighter on songs than this mammoth compilation of all the best tunes from the series so far. One thing I have been noticing is just how bloody hard the game is compared to previous console versions. It's based on the arcade games (and as we all know, those are designed to gobble up as much money as possible) and the timing seems to be way stricter than in the PS3 or Vita games. I'm used to getting Excellent grades on Extreme tracks but here, I'm still lucky just to manage a clear. I *will* master it eventually, but with 130-odd songs, it's gonna take quite a while.



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Rocket League
WHY (was it chosen?)
I simply can't play any other games

LIAM WARR

I'VE TRIED. IT'S impossible. Every time I turn on the PS4, I can't help but launch *Rocket League* for 'just a couple of games', which obviously turns into yet another evening of chasing a giant ball around in a DeLorean. I'm starting to think I will never play a game that doesn't involve doing that. And you know what? I'm okay with that. I love it as much as beer and Taylor Swift.

NEXT MONTH IN
PLAY.



PREPARE FOR...
TITANFALL 2

Respawn's mechnificent shooter explodes
onto PlayStation 4 at last!

ON iOS & ANDROID 25 AUGUST